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A

SERIES OF LETTERS

BETWEEN

MRS. ELIZABETH CARTER

AND

MISS CATHERINE TALBOT,

FROM THE YEAR 1741 TO 1770.

TO WHICH ARE ADDED,

LETTERS

FROM

MRS. ELIZABETH CARTER TO MRS. VESEY,

BETWEEN THE YEARS 1763 AND 1787;

PUBLISHED FROM THE

ORIGINAL MANUSCRIPTS IN THE POSSESSION

OF THE

REV. MONTAGU PENNINGTON, M.A.

VICAR OF NORTHBOURN, IN KENT, HER NEPHEW AND EXECUTOR.

We took sweet counsel together, and walked in the house of God as friends.

PSALM lv. Old Version.

IN FOUR VOLUMES.

VOL. III.

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A

SERIES OF LETTERS

BETWEEN

MRS. CARTER AND MISS TALBOT;

AND

LETTERS

FROM

MRS. CARTER TO MRS. VESEY.

SERIES OF LETTERS

BETWEEN

MRS. ELIZABETH CARTER

AND

MISS CATHERINE TALBOT.

MISS TALBOT TO MRS. CARTER.

Lambeth, *May* 14, 1762.

THIS Letter has many errands, dear Miss Carter, the first is to welceme you to the end of your journey, where I have the comfort of thinking that you will not meet with any one countenance so ungracious as that which has distressed you for so many months past; but will find all your friends and neighbours *looking* the joy, that I defy them not to *feel* upon seeing you amongst them again. You cannot imagine how I am haunted with the thoughts of having grieved you, and yet from my weary and dejected looks, and unreason-

able low spirits, I find this has constantly been the case. Alas! I thought my only grief was to feel myself perfectly useless to you, but I have been worse, I have been hurtful to you. Was it so the last piece of a week that you entirely spent with us? I hope not, for then we had some hours that appeared to me comfortable ones. And oh how earnestly did I wish last night that you could have stayed a few weeks more to see me mend upon your hands! How would I have brightened up my countenance, and dismissed those petty cares which I have suffered hitherto to cloud it in so unsufferable a degree—At least I think I would have done so—I think I will do so, though you are absent, and will be never the better for it. I am convinced now that *bad nerves* (as one is pleased to call the indulgence of humour) are little short of a mortal sin. They disgrace one's best principles, grieve one's best friends, and make one's whole being ungrateful. Your's are of quite a different sort from mine, and with an aching head and twitching limbs you go about the world active, useful, cheerful, and thankful.——While I, plump and rosy, eating hearty, sleeping well, sit lolling in my easy chair, and not deigning even to look comfortable. Extenuate as kindly as you will, no effects of an illness, however severe, no uniformity of life, no petty cares and attentions, though vexatious and teizing

as

as gnats, can totally excuse such a disposition: it is, as you said, truly the only temptation that I have to guard against. And I am now awakened to a thorough resolution of using every endeavour to subdue it.

I believe you would have come into my room again that night, as I wished you then, and as I am now glad you did not, had you been aware into what a solemn train of thought I was led by the shutting of the door. "Now she is absolutely gone—I have not even a moment to beg her pardon, or to make out that I have not been quite so much to blame—*When* we may meet again is uncertain as human life. *How* we may meet again, is uncertain as human happiness. In this *Now* * of health, and prosperity, and ease, with every thing dearest to me around, I have always received her with infectious dejection and uncomfortable gloom. How *dare* I make any resolutions for a future time—do I deserve that *such* an opportunity should ever be granted me again! *This* opportunity then *is* gone irrevocably—The time *must* come when *every* opportunity of *every* amendment will be gone as *irrevocably*. The *last* of all last moments is hastening—and at present all the impression I leave on the mind of my most partial friend is gloom, and

* "This golden Now."—Prior.

uncomfortableness." Fatal dream? But now at last I am thoroughly awake, and a thousand thanks to you as the kind instrument of awakening me? I sat down and cried comfortably, writ you a note, which I will enclose, and then prudently determined not to send it, lest it should hurt you.

I therefore went quietly to sleep, and waked just after six, with the very painful thought that you was absolutely gone. I did not then know that you was gone with a bad head-ache. Surely you could feel no concern at parting with *me*—And why you should ever have cared for me, but out of mere compassion, I can hardly guess—But on those thoughts I will not dwell, nor much on the recollection how often I have made you promises of amendment that are still to be made again. May it be now to more lasting purpose! Farewell! I know not how to thank you enough for all the goodness I have so little deserved. I wish you every happiness, and as a small part of it, that you could know with what true esteem and gratitude I am, &c.

THE NOTE THAT WAS ENCLOSED.

NOTWITHSTANDING that, I dare say I shall sleep very well, but wake I hope to quite another sort of life than my lethargic one has been, I beseech you form a smiling and sparkling idea of me—I trust it shall be a true one. I will not sit down and lament, but get up and amend. You have done me infinite good, and let that give you pleasure. Blessings attend your steps, and may you enjoy health better than mine, with the continuance of your own temper and spirits! Adieu!

MRS. CARTER TO MISS TALBOT.

Deal, *May* 17, 1762.

THE confusion of an aching head, and a clouded understanding, obliged me, much against my will, to defer thanking you, my dear Miss Talbot, for your Letter, which I earnestly wished to do the moment I received it. Indeed before I got it I longed to write to you, on the subject that has so much engaged my thoughts since our last conversation. I have made myself a thousand reproaches, fearing

fearing I had exprest myself in such a manner as to encrease that dejection of your spirits which I so ardently desired to relieve. I had no idea that I had left such painful impressions on your mind as your Letter shows me I did, it would have been impossible for me to have left you if I had, without endeavouring to remove them. I did not return into your room, because I thought probably I might weary you and do you hurt, though I much wished it. I find too late that I might have done you good, and what would I give that I had then known it was in my power! You cannot think how much I have been distressed in finding that I was neither of the least use or amusement to you. Yet could I have seen you well enough to be amused by other means, I should have been satisfied. Amidst all the unmerited advantages of my own situation and improved spirits, for which I can never be sufficiently thankful, I have had many a secret painful feeling that with such superior goodness you were less happy than I. Yet I fancied something might be done to alleviate a disorder which alas cannot be totally cured; but the difficulty there was of seeing you alone, and talking it over, prevented its being mentioned till that last evening; but surely I must have very ill expressed myself to tempt you to pass so severe a censure on yourself. My real intention was to make you judge more equitably

equitably of yourself, to remove the painful imagination that there was any thing voluntary in an inactivity, the mere effect of constitutional disorder.

The principle of this imagination is a noble one, as indeed I believe you scarcely ever had a wrong opinion that was not the consequence of some right tendency carried to excess; and I honor it to the highest degree, at the same time that I see with the deepest concern how sadly the fatal influence of distemper has misapplied it to a discontent with yourself, which, if not vigorously opposed, will wear away every guiltless enjoyment of your life; weaken all the spirits of your virtues; and by an unavailing regret for not being able to do all you wish, will incapacitate you from doing what you can. Your mind, my dear friend, has the dispositions of angelic natures: but your constitution has alas too much of the weakness of frail mortality, to assist you in all the high attempts at which your virtue aims. In this state of imperfection, the kind and extent of our duties must be regulated by the extent of our animal powers. To these, beyond a certain degree, no effort of resolution can make the least addition: and you might just as reasonably accuse yourself for not being able to fly, when by flying no doubt you might in many instances be exceedingly useful, as for not performing

ing many other tasks, which, though they are not in general quite so uncommon, are to you upon the same principle equally impracticable.

I know not, my dear Miss Talbot, whether I have said any thing that can do you any good: I only know that you have always my most affectionate good wishes. May that power who alone can render them effectual, and to whose protection and favour you have so distinguished a claim, give you that peace and sunshine of joy, which nothing but the grievous operation of distemper could prevent from being the consequence of principles and a conduct like your's.

You could not be more affected by the solemn train of thought into which you were led that last night, than I was by your account of it. Yet I hope it will please God that we may meet again with the same happy circumstances in all other respects, and with more cheerfulness to each other. Your example, or it will be inexcusably my own fault, must always be of importance to me, and I hope I shall make proper use of it, and better spirits will render my more varied scene of life capable of making me some little amusement to you. In the mean time believe me to be with the highest esteem and most sincere affection, &c.

Miss TALBOT to Mrs. CARTER.

Lambeth, *May* 21, 1762.

It was cruel not to be able to write you so much as a line of thanks immediately, my dear Miss Carter, in return for so kind and so useful a Letter. I have studied it over and over, not I hope to the purpose of making myself vain, but to that of improving by advice so gently given, and of encreasing my affectionate gratitude to the adviser. I do not put down to the score of compliment any one of the very fine things you have said of me, for notwithstanding your good sense and discernment, I believe you think them every one—and as there are two *classes* of angels, I will also allow my disposition to be naturally as angelical as you please. I will go further, and thankfully acknowledge that by the best of cultivation, that wild nature has been improved in many instances into somewhat very different; and that it is my duty not to sit down discouraged at the infinite that still remains to be amended; but like honest Welch Betty, to root up one weed after another from day to day, and try, if I can, to sing and look cheerful at my work. Accordingly I have gone on with more

cheerfulness

cheerfulness ever since my mind was relieved by writing its overflowings to you; and it has been greatly assisted by your very kind answer and encouragement. Let us, in justice to indulgent mercy, hope the best of another year, and meanwhile make the best of the present. I am sorry you had such a whirling journey, and pity your fright from the wicked dog of a horse. I more pity your present unsettled situation; but comfort yourself when you sit in your littered room, that at least you can sit in it with an unlittered mind; which is more, I fear, than many a fine lady can say, whose pictures, and shells, and china are the most nicely arranged. I rejoice in your shower; our's did not come till yesterday, but then plentiful, and with one flash of lightning and clap of thunder, which my mother and I enjoyed to perfection in a short airing. Indeed *I did* enjoy very highly the mercy of its going off without any more, or my poor mother would have suffered much. Since you went I have seen many agreeable people. Lady Charlotte Finch, who is most truly amiable and charming, brought her daughter hither in a most friendly manner. Lady Edgecumbe spent a pleasant morning here. Good Mrs. Donnelan, you see, is gone to the regions for which she had been so long preparing, and where sickness is no more.

Yesterday's

Yesterday's weather affected me from head to foot, (including my heart), yet I am well, in good humour, and good spirits.

His Grace charges me to have an account from you in writing when and where you saw the fellow picture to that which we call Luther and his wife, and how they come in your's to be called Calvin and Calvina! The Potter and Smythe families are here. We are as jolly as can be at meals, and do not molest one another at other times. In a morning they go their way, and we go our's. In evenings I believe they have a quadrille, and we saunter, or write, or do as we please.

Lord Lyttelton is somewhat better to day, and so is poor Lady Tyrconnel, though her state is still very doubtful.

This Letter was begun some time ago, but the Archbishop has got a sad fit of the gout, which has put all other things out of my head. Think, poor soul, of the inconvenience to him not to be able to sign his name for the last fortnight. But we are thankful it came before he set out on his three weeks' journey of constant heat and business*. The Bishop of Lincoln is this day set out without him. Think but how glad I am to have all my schemes of three weeks' retirement and quiet thus

* The visitation of his diocese.

overturned.

overturned. What anxiety would my mother and I unavoidably have felt had he set out with a hand as big as two, and strong symptoms of gout in his foot! I would not have given up my *sospirato ritiro* for the *gayest* scheme that could be offered me: but for this *safe* scheme I do most joyfully. Not but I am gay too. Believe it or not, but it is absolutely fact, I was for an hour and three quarters at Lady Northumberland's grand rout on Saturday, and very well pleased to find myself there. I went at seven, and found only her Ladyship and your poor Charlotte. I was pleased with Charlotte's looks, dress, and behaviour; they seemed to me very proper. Lady Northumberland was very pleasant and agreeable, and the medley did not begin to come in till about eight, and I could have been amused with staying longer, but I thought it right to be home by nine. I walked through the garden, which was prettily illuminated, and retreated through a back door, by which I avoided the crowd of coaches. The music in the gardens was just begun, the moon rising in glory behind an illuminated alcove, and the Princess of Mecklembourg every minute expected. Alas, Lady Northumberland had raised my spirits, by telling me Lord Anson was well enough to be gone that day to Moor Park: guess how we were struck by the sad news of the next morning. Very possibly had

he

he lived and been well, I might never have seen him more, but I always should have felt the comfort of having a real and justly valued friend.

Miss TALBOT to Mrs. CARTER.

Lambeth, *August* 14, 1762.

I HAVE been very busy all day packing up drawers and papers, in order for my removal for two days to Jessamine Hall, (a new and very appropriate name for my mother's hotel), while my own rooms are thoroughly set to rights, and now I am tired, and must go into the garden for a little fresh air, and look after the fishes, and the pusses, and the gull, and the ducks, and then I must write a Letter upon business for his Grace, who cannot yet do it for himself, so adieu.

This morning, between necessary attendances, indispensible notes, dinner consultations, harpsichord tunes, paper murder, and visitors, I had not a minute till past twelve: then I went to town, meaning to make visits, but stopped short at Lady C. Finch's, and so pleasant was it, that I could not find in my heart to come away till dinner-time.

We had a pleasant party at dinner, and for the evening; this is the life you wish me to lead, as it is mightily calculated for health and amusement; but could a little leisure be intermixed with it, it would be better still. If I have *leisure* to-morrow noon, I shall drink Bristol water, and saunter with a book in the shade. I wish you would write a little pocketable volume, philosophy or poetry, which you will, so it be quite new. I have a Letter from Mrs. Mackenzie, quite like herself, and that makes one love and pity her; the Captain is gone with Sir G. Pocock. I find from Mrs. Montagu you too are moved, and I want to hear from yourself an account of your new habitation, and whether it suits your fancy, or your fancy is forced (philosophically) to suit itself to that. The latter is the surest way to be pleased, though I have (shame for me) been here so many years before I could find it out. Indeed this house and these gardens are this summer delightful. Emin was at Moscow the end of April, and setting forward to Georgia, but not in good humour, and he has not vouchsafed a line to any one in England.

Guess where I was, and voluntarily, last Monday. In a small assembly room at Madame Munchhausen's, among all the *Excellencies* from all the courts in Europe—France and Spain, alas, excepted.

cepted. I sat long by a loo table, to survey Prince Ernest: he is a very handsome, lively, sensible youth. Do you know what a noble thing Lady Northumberland has done for poor Charlotte? When her goods were seized, she sent her a bank note of 500l. to retrieve them. Sweet Lady Spencer is in a doubtful way. My heart bleeds for poor Mrs. Poyntz and Charles, as poor hopeless Louisa still lingers on.—17th.

I am now determined to finish this Letter, for I am ashamed of it. The Archbishop is still but poorly, though it has been a friendly visit, without any alarming symptoms; but I fear he will have it in both hands, and I feel it grievously. But if I allowed my thoughts to dwell on the sad side, how should I keep up the cheerfulness that alone can make one useful? Persons that are not well ought see cheerful faces about them; they are the best kind of cordial; but indeed I would rather my own hand were in pain, and yet perhaps I should not bear it with half the patience that he does. This gout was obliging in coming no sooner. His Grace was called to St. James's only an hour before his usual time of rising; he was very well all that joyous day, and has been at court several times since; I hope his hand will be well before the christening.

Are

Are you not delighted with the choice of Lady Charlotte Finch for governess? Every body is pleased with it, how could they be otherwise, you will say. I should have been more pleased still had I know who (nay, don't look so cross) been made deputy governess; instead of a certain Mrs. Colesworth, whom I know not.

Let me congratulate you on the admirable effects of your Epictetus. The Czarina has some time read it through with the highest admiration and approbation. Dr. Dumaresque is returned, glad to be recalled to a little living near Wells, of 140l. a year, given him by the Bishop of Bath and Wells, at Lord Grenville's recommendation. I hope it will not be long before he has somewhat better *, as all the Russians interest themselves for him in a very friendly manner. When he came away two months ago, Emin was on his way to Astracan, with a safe convoy, and a very strong Letter from the great Chancellor to Prince Heraclius. The poor Princess of Georgia died at Moscow the same day with the late Czarina, so knew not the event that had she lived would have answered all her wishes, and recalled her to Petersburgh.

Write me any thing you know of Mrs. Montague: she promised me I should see a Vision in

* He had afterward a stall at Salisbury.

verse

verse of Lord Lyttelton's, but I fear has forgot it *.

Miss TALBOT to Mrs. CARTER.

Lambeth, *Sept.* 1, 1762.

Thank my stars, I have torn it this minute all to bits! What? Why a reflection upon the Vision, that would have made you smile, but that was of a kind I will not suffer myself to write; and now I have had the trouble and the hindrance both of writing and tearing it, I am pretty well fortified against the next temptation.

I am enclosing back the Vision the very night I received it, to prevent all temptations to dishonesty or carelessness; 'tis certainly very elegant.

On your approbation I have been a second time at Madame Munchhausen's, but whether wearied with my ride, or whatever was the matter, I was less amused than the time before. I felt to myself

* As the Editor is in possession of a copy of this Vision, which he believes is not inserted in any edition of Lord Lyttelton's Poems, and presumes that it may gratify the curiosity of the public, it will be printed at the end of the fourth volume.

as if I stood in every body's way, and could not help wondering what business I had there. However, I do really love those two girls, (well I may, for they have taken a passion for me, and call me nothing but *my angel,*) and am heartily sorry that they are going to leave England for good, and all in about a week. We are to correspond, they assure me. I warned them fairly, that I am a sad deferring Correspondent. When, alas, shall I have a little leisure to converse with myself? If I could but contrive to rise early as you do, but my health will not allow it, how happy would it make me!

Yesterday evening we were entertained by one of the noblest storms I ever enjoyed, and truly this was not enjoyed without some mixture of terror. My mother sat with me till past one, and I tried to amuse away her fears as suitably as I could by reading her some of the noblest passages in Dr. Young. By that hour we were both, even in spite of *him,* somewhat sleepy, and there was an interval of lightning (I mean an interval of darkness) that made the hall just passable.

On Thursday I condescended to amuse myself with *terrestrial* grandeur, and went by a very obliging appointment to Lady Charlotte Finch's to see the young Prince in his state cradle, and afterwards spent an hour or two very agreeably in the Queen's drawing-room, drinking caudle, and chatting

ting with Lady Egremont, who was exceedingly kind and obliging, as was all the gay world. I even made acquaintance with Miss Van C. who looked very clever and very good-humoured. I conversed with my *great* cousin, and was at last tugged away by main force by my *good* cousin (Bet), who reminded me of dinner-time in the midst of my cake and caudle and gaiety. One of the liveliest, most friendly-looking persons I saw, was Mrs. Anne Pitt, who congratulated my appearance at St. James's with up-lifted hands.

I have had the long-expected Letter from Sir Charles Poyntz, to tell me that poor Louisa's sufferings are at last concluded. He proposes being here next month.

Miss TALBOT to Mrs. CARTER.

Lambeth, *Sept.* 30, 1762.

Joy to you of the glorious news—the news so long expected, so almost despaired of, and so infinitely important! If I can write but three lines you shall have them by this Post. Yet probably mine may not be your first intelligence that the Havannah surrendered the same day that the

Prince was born. How amazing is the series of mercies with which it has pleased God to bless this nation! Our affairs in America had been utterly ruined if this great event had not taken place. I long for the Gazette, to see what is become of Capt. Mackenzie.

I could break my heart for the truly brave Velasco, who stood single in the breach, with the standard in his hand, and the colours wrapt round his body, and fired a pistol at our people, instead of asking quarter, as they entreated him to do. He is, alas, dead of his honourable wounds. The rascally Governor of the city, and the Viceroys of some other of the Spanish places who were there, have capitulated for their own paltry treasures, but not a word for their master. They are unhanged, and Velasco is dead! Eleven ships of the line are taken and three sunk; already a million and a half of treasure is our's. Our whole loss in the affair, long and obstinate as it was, is computed at a thousand men, and those more by sickness than the sword.

What period of our history was ever so glorious as the reign of George the Third? I have smiled and nodded to-day at all the people in the Clapham road, and notified the good news on the highway to two or three. You see I am in charming spirits, which says that I am, thank God, very well. The

Arch-

Archbishop complains that his hands are yet weak, and one foot so so; but he was at court to-day, where the first word the King said to him, after thanking him for his congratulations, was, that he must prepare a thanksgiving Collect for next Sunday.

My mother entertained us in her music-room last night with a charming concert. Five of Mr. Sharpe's family, Messrs. Mence and Soaper, and a little jolly boy of our butcher's, that looks exactly like a small clump of beef, and sings like an angel. He was new to them all, and they were quite in raptures with him. Miss Douglas was there in high rattle. She talks of writing you a long Letter so let her, 'tis a nice subject. Mr. Porteus *, the Cambridge Chaplain, was also there, with whom we are all much delighted, and who proved to be an old friend of the Sharpe's. Do not we live joyously here? O dear, since I writ last we have had a christening and a wedding. Little Joyce has produced a little girl, and Dr. Hall has married Miss Carsaw. We saw them at breakfast, and I scarce ever saw a prettier or more pleasing young woman. I have long wished her this happiness. If you could suppose a damask rose, talking in a very sweet voice very sensibly, and looking mo-

* Now Bishop of London.

destly

destly about it with very pretty eyes, it would be Mrs. Hall. They went directly to Bocking; she had never been five miles from home before.

Have you been your country excursion you talked of? If not, pray make use of this lovely weather, vary the scene, and improve your spirits, or I protest I will either get you a place at court or a husband.

Miss TALBOT to Mrs. CARTER.

Lambeth, *Oct.* 9, 1762.

Your last account of yourself, my dear Miss Carter, has never been out of my head or heart a day since I received it, and has caused me much uneasiness. I wish I could write to do you any good. All that could be said on the subject Mrs. Montagu has said when she prescribed the perpetual blister, and your noble resolution of perseverance cannot be too much applauded. Desiring you to try the change of air signifies nothing, unless you were the subject of an arbitrary prince, and one could write you a "lettre de cachet."—Only let what, alas, you have suffered this summer make you resolve to go to Tunbridge next,

next. To Tunbridge for its own sake, whether with or without such glass windows and sugar-plumbs as Mrs. Montagu, Lords Lyttleton and Bath. I wish you had been there this year, even with the Burrows, who by the bye, have made a strong friendship with Dr. Monsey.

The Archbishop is, thank God, better, and again out; I would not write to you while he was so bad, since my own hard heart felt so uncomfortable about him, that I did not care to trust your's, which is pained when one's finger does but ach. My mother is quite well, and I am better than I have been for years, and daily feel more cause for thankfulness for all those kind cares and attentions that were, under a merciful Providence, the means of renewing a lease of life so near expired four years ago, and which I find at present so well worth holding. I am just at this minute in much the better spirits for having learnt that good Mrs. Smythe got safe last night to Wycomb, as bridges had been carried away, and the waters out in the roads she meant to have gone, that made us very uneasy about her journey; but by crossing from Salt Hill to Wycomb she avoided them. I never saw the amiable efficacy of Christian principles more strongly than in her. The *polish of the world* is mere varnish to what she acquires in her well-improved retirement; the more I see

I see of her, the more I love and value her. I wish it were ever in your way to be better acquainted with her—in some very valuable particulars you greatly resemble each other.

Oh, but do you know that you are actually married to Mr. Foster? I learnt it from the Bishop of Oxford but two days ago. Some days since I saw poor Dr. Dalton; he is grown a mere shadow, cannot walk a step, and has but little use of his hands; however, he seems well, and talks as cheerfully and as much as ever. A most charming wife he has, who, instead of pitying and breaking her heart about him from morning to night, has a genuine joyousness of her own that keeps up his spirits. She conceals under a laughing countenance the most assiduous cares, makes him forget that he has any complaints, and seems quite happy herself in a life that would wear down any body else. He lent me a little book of garden inscriptions, out of which I copied two that pleased me, and enclose them, as you may not have happened to see them.

Do not expect me to say a word of politics; I love sunshine and smooth weather, and hate clouds and storms. Send me just one line to say you are better, for it will much rejoice my heart.

Miss TALBOT to Mrs. CARTER.

Lambeth, *Dec.* 23, 1762.

A merry Christmas and a happy new year to you, dear Miss Carter. We heartily rejoice in your amendment, but we shall be no judges of it unless you let us see you before you see London, as in coming from thence hither you will be wearied, besides going into London air at once you will certainly have a seasoning cold; it is therefore humbly submitted to your consideration whether it would not be better for you to spend a week in the verge of the smoke (before you go souse into it) and be my mother's guest, as you was for a few days in spring. I much wish you may approve my scheme, as I shall then be sure of seeing you a few times comfortably. Do not reject my proposal, unless you are hardened enough to prefer the prospect of wreck from your windows before that of the plump porter and thriving bantams in Lambeth court. Poor Mr. Berkeley has been dangerously ill at Bray—but why do I pity him for his illness, however severe, caught in the indefatigable discharge of the noblest duty, in attending his sick parishioners in damp cottages. Thank God, he is getting quite well again.

I have

I have lately been reading over with most sincere gratitude, and with many good resolutions, the kind, the truly kind Letter, you sent me on our last parting. I hope you will find me on the whole a great deal better—far enough from what I ought to be still. As languid as ever at times, but in general more evenly cheerful. I write with less dislike and difficulty than I did, work with indefatigable diligence; I have even done into English, before I was aware, a sonnet of Carlo Maggi, and have more than half finished a pair of three-double ruffles. But every now and then, from involuntary unavoidable weariness, my countenance will fall, and my head be confused *. If you ever chance to see me at such an unlucky minute, ascribe it to its true cause, the weakness of soon exhausted spirits, and do not let it hurt you, for I think I am much mended since last year. I am afraid you cannot give so good an account of yourself: the thought of this *really* hurts me, and makes me very impatient to see you, with the flattering hope too that I may for once see you mend in London.

* 'Tis melancholy to trace in all these symptoms the cruel disorder that cut short the life of this most inestimable woman, and wonderful to see how heroically she bore them, supported by that hope that disappointeth not.

My

My quiet life has been distinguished to-day by an event that you will be pleased to hear—the pleasure of Lord Lyttelton's company in my dressing-room for half an hour. Whether of his voluntary motion, or whether the porter officiously told him I only was at home, I dare not enquire for fear of being mortified. Be that as it will, I was sincerely glad to see him, he is looking quite well again. I meant to have writ you a longer Letter, but am interrupted. My chief purpose, however, in writing is answered, that of pressing you to come here, and of having expressed some part of the affection and gratitude with which I am, my kind adviser, &c.

Miss TALBOT to Mrs. CARTER.

Lambeth, *April* 26, 1763.

Indeed, dear Miss Carter, (though my conscience happily told me that there was no need of conveying a penitential billet to your *coucher*,) I did fully intend by the next post to have sent you a Letter of thanks and much gratitude for your kind and constant visits, and for all the pleasure you had given us recluses, with very often,

often, I fear, much bodily pain and fatigue to yourself. But every hour has been taken up, and I feel at this minute (three o'clock) what has been the inspiration of many a voluminous author, hunger, and as that must per force wait till the grandees yonder have dined, I try to forget it by leading my thoughts to seek you on the sea-shore. I hope your three pilots * guided you safely to Deal, and wish much to see it under your own hand, and that you are tolerably well, and find every person and thing around you as cheerful and comfortable as one can expect persons and things to be in this *worky day world.*

On Friday I called on Miss Sutton, but she, alas, had just been sent for to attend the last moments of poor Mrs. Pulteney. On Saturday my passion for High Dutch, which had been drooping ever since you went, unfortunately revived, and stole away the time in which I ought to have wrote; but I did write two short Letters, one to Lady Grey, to correct some monstrous lies I had writ her by way of news; the other to poor Miss Douglas. Alas, the accounts from Bristol are melancholy, but she fancies the hearing from me a sort of comfort, therefore that poor comfort she shall not want.

* The account of this journey with the pilots is given in page 166 of the Memoirs.

Your

Your Carlo Maggi, were he not such a horrible papist, is a most excellent companion to me. Do you remember the laughing prologue to a comedy of Plautus? Surely it is quite original: and whether Carlo is penitential, or merry, or critical, or satirical, or complimental, one sees the same pure amiable good mind predominant through every form. Indeed it hurts me grievously that he should have been born in a popish country, and some flights of his popery are quite shocking. Absurdities of this kind would I fear take off his weight with many persons, but surely there might be a *scelta* made even with parts of his Letters to Rosa, that would be a most valuable book. No dinner yet, and my genius flags: I must take a turn in the garden where I have already spent a couple of hours to-day.

Well I have at last had a very good dinner of beef; and received your Letter with much pleasure. Drank tea with Mrs. J. Yorke, and returned by pleasant moonlight. I was up at six this morn, that Mrs. Govers and party below might set out early on a country excursion. I am well, but am heavy hearted in the extreme for our poor sweet friend Miss Douglas at Bristol.

Mrs. CARTER to Miss TALBOT.

Deal, *May* 10, 1763 *.

No certainly, my dear Miss Talbot, there was not the least shadow of reason for any such billet as you mention from you, but of great gratitude from me for the happiness I always felt whenever I saw you this winter. I am extremely obliged to you for giving me an account of yourself even before you received my Letter. I heartily grieve to find you still receive such bad accounts of poor Miss Douglas, alas I fear no better are to be expected. Your Letters must certainly be the best human consolation she can possibly receive in her present melancholy situation, as you have always been in all respects the greatest blessing to her which she has ever known. I was sorry to find you was frustrated in your attempt at seeing Miss Sutton. Her spirits I fear must be hurt by an attendance of the same melancholy kind as she was engaged in last year; but she has too

* It is much to be regretted that not any of Mrs. Carter's Letters are to be found from May 1762 till the present date, except the short one copied in the Memoirs as mentioned in the last page.

strict

strict an attention to every duty of this sort to regard what effect it may have on herself.

Carlo Maggi is, indeed, a most excellent companion, and I agree with you in lamenting that one cannot recommend the most elegant, the most amiable, and the most useful of all the Italian poets without so many cautions and qualifications. I wish your scheme of a *scelta* could take place, and yet it would be a very difficult task, as I fear some of his finest pieces have often a mixture of popish wildness and absurdity. I do not particularly recollect the prologue you mention, and perhaps never read it, as I am mighty apt to skip the humorous pieces, but I will look over it on your recommendation.—But what have I to do at present with the sweet strains of Carlo Maggi? My business will be for some time to accommodate myself to the knockings of a hammer, and the scratchings of a saw. Not that I have yet been able to effect any earthly thing, but form schemes which nobody is at leisure to execute.

I was much obliged by your dinner of beef, by which I am to understand that you are quite well. My appetite has been rather more refined and sentimental; sipping tea on my pillow has sufficed me; but I am I think returning to a relish for more vulgar dinners, and next week I hope by air and exercise, which some idle impediment or other has

prevented

prevented ever since I came home, to mend my head-aches. When you write to Bristol I beg my kindest and best wishes.

Miss TALBOT to Mrs. CARTER.

Lambeth, *May* 14, 1763.

My mother and I are sitting together after a really comfortable tête à tête dinner, the good lady taking a gentle nap, and the rain dropping into the sullen fire somewhat like Milton's minute drops from off the eaves. Dr. and Mrs. Potter have been here some time, but are gone this fine day to dine at Clapham. Our after dinner amusement has been a very pleasant Letter from Lady Grey, who returns next week. By and by I expect a *very* melancholy one from Bristol, perhaps it may not come to day, but come it *must*, and I fear in a very little while. I am charmed with the Dean of Ossory (elder half brother to poor Mr. Nicholls whom you remember there) for his humanity and friendship to her, and that poor friendless Miss Mackenzie. Lady Spencer too has I find been very kind to them.—But alas, how poor a thing

are

are the civilities of lords and ladies at such an awful period—Think what a painful task I have engaged in, writing to her every post. I have been doing it just now, and it has sunk my spirits beyond expression. But I will change the subject, for to hurt oneself where one cannot do any good to others, I am sure is wrong. Carlo Maggi I am sure would not have approved it. Some of his prose is delightful. Pray do not read the death of Adam. It is extremely fine, but so painful, that at first it gives one's thoughts a wrong turn—one cannot get it out of one's head; yet if one thinks it throughly over, one may get a great deal of good out of it. We shall have a very different one after supper, Lady Mary Wortley Montagu's Letters. They are very amusing for that half hour, and I dare say genuine. Mrs. Montagu whom I saw a few days ago, first told me of them.

I have a thousand things to tell you—oh that you were here to hear them! but absolutely can write no more just now, so adieu!

Mrs. CARTER to Miss TALBOT.

Deal, *May* 25, 1763.

I have every day been wishing to thank you for your Letter, and every day I have been too much harassed by business of one kind or other to attempt it. A fit of the head-ache has sent me to my pillow to-day, and I will try if my tea will enable me to write you a few lines. I have just got my apartment finished in our new house, and am now conveying my books, &c. there. The ranging them in their places, following the workmen in the other rooms, and such like jobs, find me such constant employment that I am worn down every night. Indeed I have laboured more for this last fortnight than befits a two legged creature; but I was in such a hurry to get my affairs put in some train before I set out, that I knew not well how to avoid it. In the midst of my bustle it helps to untire me when I consider it is the last of the kind in which I am ever likely to be engaged, if it pleases God to preserve us from any unforeseen accident—One part of my business has been to reduce a strange wild stony spot into the form of something like a garden, which is happily com-

pleated

pleated. It is smaller than you can well imagine, but it will be full of roses and honeysuckles, and I am pleased, and thankful for it*. And the possessor of Versailles can be no more.

I heartily grieve for what your spirits must suffer by the melancholy task which you have the goodness to undertake of writing so frequently to poor Miss Douglas, it must be the greatest and most useful comfort that our poor friend can possibly receive.—Perhaps by this time she does not need it. Miss Mackenzie's situation makes one's heart ache. I am obliged to you for mentioning the kindness and attention they have both met with from the Dean of Ossory.

Our party is to rendezvous at Dover on the third of next month, you will I hope give me the pleasure of hearing you are well before I set out. My head thinks it has been sufficiently complying, and is become outrageous, so I must say adieu!—

* In this little spot did Mrs. Carter spend many hours every day, having collected all the sweets so small a place could contain, it was quite an ornament to the South end of Deal. In it she reared her Oak so justly celebrated by Miss Knight, and which is the veneration and delight of the inhabitants of its vicinity. As long as it is in the Editor's power he will carefully shelter it from every ill.

Miss TALBOT to Mrs. CARTER.

Lambeth, *May* 28, 1763.

Had I *not* received your Letter, dear Miss Carter, I should certainly have sent you my good wishes for a prosperous and pleasant voyage. I heard it all talked over on Thursday at Mrs. Montagu's, and am already impatient to hear of your safe arrival at Calais, without being either sick or sorry. Be sure to write me from thence if it be but a line. Our accounts from Bristol are much the same, poor thing her sufferings are great; God send her a speedy release; she still flatters herself she is getting better.

I am glad your worldly affairs are so near settled, though to be sure if I was as near being wolf's-meat as Mr. Boscawen imagines you to be, it would be the least of my thoughts how to fit up an elegant apartment against my return.—Forgive me this horrible attempt at raillery, it is really in the taste of Harriet Byron's Miss Barnwell. Many many comfortable years may you be the possessor of this new dwelling, and many pleasant summers may you spend there, but not one winter.

When you are once over the sea, I shall expect you to steal on to Constantinople, and write us word whether

whether Lady Mary Wortley Montagu writ true. I had the good luck of meeting at Mrs. Montagu's Mrs. Anne Pitt, who is surely most inchantingly agreeable. There is with all her archness somewhat so natural and unaffected—for the heart of me I cannot be afraid of her, though with that superiority of understanding to be sure I ought.

This morning we have been with Mrs. Hayter, who was delightful. No house in town pleases me with the fitting up so much as their's. In others the ornaments only tell one the proprietors have taste, while every little trifle that is added at Mrs. Hayter's seems to say our ladies have resignation, and endeavour by placing cheerful objects round them, to express their gratitude to that Providence which has taken away what was most dear to them, for the possibilities of comfort and relief it has mercifully left them. I am afraid when you called there you did not walk over their small dwelling, every crick and corner of it is made pretty, and 'tis full of odd nooks, and unexpected staircases, and whimsical closets, that are preferable to all the four square rooms in——I am interrupted, bon soir, bon voyage.

Miss TALBOT to Mrs. CARTER.

Lambeth, *June* 17, 1763.

How much am I obliged to you, my dear Miss Carter, for stealing so many minutes from the amusing scenes around you, and from such companions * as you have in this agreeable tour, to make me a partaker in your entertainments. It rejoices me to see you are in such spirits; though Mrs. Anne Pitt would be terrified were she to see your Letter from Lisle, from considering what your spirits will be after 100 gallons of Spa water, if they are so improved while you are only on the road. It is with true delight I compare the prosperous and pleasing journey you are now engaged in with that melancholy (though I thank God successful) one that your friendship led you to take four years ago. The same motive has again drawn you from home †, and I hope you will have the same joy on its conclusion without going through the same anxiety. I

* Lord Bath; Mr. and Mrs. Montagu; and Dr. Douglas, chaplain to Lord Bath, and afterwards Bishop of Salisbury. Mrs. Carter's Letters from the Continent are omitted here, having been printed in her Memoirs.

† The health of a dear friend; in this instance, Mrs. Montagu, in the preceding one, Miss Talbot.

should

should have known by your manner of writing that Mrs. Montagu was better, though I thank you for telling me so. From hence you cannot expect nothing but thanks, for we untravelled folks have nothing to say that is worth reading, at least I am in a fit of insipidity that seems as if it would last till you come from Spa, for so long probably will the summer last, and then I spend so much time in the fragrant open air, that when I come in I am fitter to sleep than to correspond with beaux esprits. Remember therefore I write to you as the Miss Carter at Bristol who is used to see the worst of me, and to bear it patiently, and who has an absolute indefeasible right to know in what sort of way, and in what sort of health I creep on through insignificant still life; and do not let "Mademoiselle Mademoiselle Carter a Spa," (and much less "Madame Madame Montagu,") know what dull paquets come under her address. I know no way of making my Letters amusing, but by exhorting you to go to Constantinople, or to some place as far distant, and then every line from England will become interesting. But I had rather you should think me dull at a few days distance than be impatient for my Letters at the extremity of the globe.

Between the dates of your first and second Letters the town was amazingly bright and gay, of which to be sure Mrs. Montagu has had abundance of intelli-

intelligence from various correspondents. The Duke of Richmond's fireworks we saw very prettily from Lambeth gallery; and about half a score of Masks we saw at Lady Grey's; I have not preserved a distinct idea of any of their dresses; though Lady Howe's which was somewhat Turkish pleased me extremely; her figure so perfectly genteel, her manner so suited to her dress, and yet so much her own. I hear that in general there was more aim of keeping up to the characters of the dresses than has been usual at these silly entertainments. The illumination, that evening in the Queen's gardens, was such an amiable pleasing galanterie, and on the whole so well executed, that you will I am sure have been pleased with hearing of it; and I hope you indulge an honest English vanity in talking of all these things in countries where they will certainly figure well in conversation.

We are infinitely struck with the device of your seal: a jolly plump gentleman, with a huge dart sticking I think to all appearance in his throat, but as I conclude it is a dart of your's, I make no doubt of its being deep in his heart by this time. Your chronologers at St. Omer's are delightful. With your guide to Lisle I am not a little angry, however you got safe through your rough twelve miles—I could enter into some political debate on the appearance of wretchedness you expected in a

land of slavery, as I am convinced that *moderate* slavery is less productive of wretchedness, than immoderate licentiousness. *The field of the slothful* will not mend its desolate appearance without some exertion of authority to set him to work. What you mean by the town of Lisle being *paved like St. James's park*, (those are your words) we do not quite comprehend, though indeed I have presumed for *park* to read *square*!* I could gladly have accompanied you in your visits to the Nuns, and long to have some acquaintance with sœur Contente, who you see has not the least need of your Epictetus. But I did not think ladies had been forbidden to see the inside of nunneries, and I fancy she must have seen somewhat peculiarly mondaine, and anti-nunnish in your looks, that put her on frightening you away with such a terrible condition.

The Archbishop has the gout, but charges me with kind remembrances to the traveller—My mother sends her love—Poor Miss Douglas is much as she was. The newest news I can send you from hence is that Mr. Johnson the head gardener was

* In Mrs. Carter's original Letter the word *Park* is erased, and *Square* written over it; which must have been done when the Letters were returned to her after Miss Talbot's death, for the correction is in her own hand writing. There are many similar instances in her Letters.

yesterday

yesterday married to Miss Molly Moore, a young lady as accomplished as the Princess Nausicaa*: and I really believe they will be very happy, for they both continue in the family. We all long to hear that your acquaintance is commencing with the King of Prussia, as we fully intend that Mrs. Montagu and you should make him quite good. I was so fully determined that this should go to-day, that I would not once trust myself amongst the rose bushes though they are in the highest beauty.

Miss TALBOT to Mrs. CARTER.

Lambeth, *July* 2, 1763.

Another Letter ought to set out for Spa with thanks for the very welcome one received from thence. I quite envy Mrs. Chapone's for having been the first to welcome you, and I may the more excusably, as mine would have been earlier but for my involuntary hindrances.

I was disappointed to find Bruxelles so disagreeable a town. Mr. Charles Poyntz says there is no

* See Homer's Odyssey. Book VI.

Cathedral

Cathedral there, but some cabinet of curiosities* that you ought to have seen: you should also have studied the lace manufacture. He has been in town a few days to take leave of Lady Spencer who is already on her way to you. Pray be good to her and keep her as quiet as you can, that she may not too soon wear out that delicate frame and that sweet mind.

Your journey to Liege was dreadful, and I confess I had rather travel with five fat English gentlewomen in a stage coach along our smooth turnpike roads, than with Mrs. Montagu herself vis a vis in these rugged and calamitous ways. Even *I* should now prefer Lady Abercorn's partie at Tunbridge to *your* elegant conversaziones over the mountains. I am glad however you intend to repass the Spa mountains, which I confess, were I once there, I should be loth to do, till the howling of winter wolves drove out the old fear by a new one. One whole winter Bishop Benson spent there, and I look upon the place for that reason as you people of genius do upon classic ground. Do find out if you can the people with whom he lodged, for *you* are worthy of the pleasure which any little anecdote they can

* Probably the arsenal, which Mrs. Carter did see and mentions in a Letter to another friend.

tell

tell you of him, or the seeing him remembered with affectionate reverence will give you.

When you complained of rain we were choaking with dust, but now 'tis kindly come hither, and I hope has left you at liberty to ramble about and drink. You must never write to me when it gives you the head-ache, but whenever your Letters come the day is marked with an agreeable incident—and that let me tell you is no small matter in days so uniform as our's at Lambeth in England.

You are charming pretty ladies to refuse venturing into a nunnery, and then attack the poor monks in their convent. The good friar did well to see you safe into your coach. I like your white walls very well, they are clean and cheerful. Perdrigan is affronted at your mentioning the music of a cuckoo, when Spa it seems is famous for its nightingales. But I am more affronted at the owls of the country, that they have not yet sent a deputation from the wooded mountain to your window.

Mrs. Francis, who was here two or three days to study roses fresh from the tree (and they are just now in most sweet bloom and the whole garden fragrant beyond expression) is somewhat anxious to know whether the trimming is arrived bright and whole through so many misadventures: I could not help telling her of the overthrow of the chaise marine, because a little separate solicitude that does not

not go near the heart is very useful to keep one's spirits in play: Charles Poyntz added that the very packing paper (a stronger texture than gauze) used to be shook to absolute powder in those rocky roads. All this to be sure is well worth sending over seas and mountains! 'Tis well the post and paquets do not know what trash they carry. You would have had a longer Letter had I not been interrupted by a most agreeable visitor for three hours, and now I am engaged for the rest of the day. All happiness be your's.

Miss TALBOT to Mrs. CARTER.

Lambeth, *July* 21, 1763.

I CAN have no longer patience, dear Miss Carter, 'tis ages since I heard from you; 'tis near three weeks since I sent away my last: and the only one I have had from Spa was dated the 17th of last month. I am seriously uneasy and apprehensive of your being ill. Mrs. Govers* (for I have had so many soliloquies about you, that she overheard one of them) says, *to be sure you*

* The Housekeeper.

are

are so taken up with all the fine places and fine folks at France, that you have no time to write. But I know you are not at Paris, nor drinking the waters of Lethe, and unless those of Spa had acquired the same quality you would not I am sure quite forget me. Indeed, had Lord Lyttelton been of your party, I should have had some suspicion that he had carried you off en croupe upon his Pegasus to that more classical water drinking place, in order to note down the conversations you might fall into with illustrious shades; and though I am convinced he would have brought you back again very safe, yet a single glass of Lethe inadvertently taken might have robbed me of my correspondent effectually. I do not know how I can write so idly for I am unhappy till I hear from you.

I hope you have sent all your rain to us, and that Spa rejoices in seasonable sunshine, while poor Tunbridge is drowned. Not that I am at Tunbridge, but I had a Letter from thence just now. It is thin, dull, and wet. I think their number of dancers has not exceeded four couple. Our late rains have made jessamine hall delightfully fragrant.

I think it will be a relief to your mind to know poor Miss Douglas is released, it was so to mine. A painful relief indeed to know that one shall never more in this world enjoy the enlivening society of one so very amiable and so truly friendly! But, alas,

for

for months past there has not appeared a possibility of her recovery; she was perfectly resigned, and indeed as earnestly desirous, as was consistent with resignation, to enter on that state "where the wicked cease from troubling, and the weary are at rest." What a life of suffering has her's been! I can think this with pleasure *now*, because now I can only think of it as enhancing her future, nay rather her present happiness. With what a peculiar nobleness of character did she go through such various trials! Her friend Mrs. Rodney was at Bristol, and a very great comfort to her for some weeks before she died. The Dean of Ossory was with her every day, and has behaved in a manner for which I shall honour him as long as I live. He has taken poor little Caroline Mackenzie home to his own house. I was anxious to think what would become of her now her aunt was dead and her parent's return so very uncertain. I had just received a Letter from Mrs. Mackenzie, dated Jamaica. Judge then how agreeably I was surprised while that Letter lay before me, to see her come into my room. She had flown up to town, had heard the fatal news, and was hastening back to Portsmouth to carry her two boys to their long-absent father. Her look was excessively distressing, and she did not shed a tear, which, in her who is so apt to cry, alarmed me; so I did not let her go till

till I had led her into conversation that made her cry heartily. She is far from well, has numberless perplexities and vexations, besides this heavy affliction. I wish they were a little settled in some comfortable way, that she might take care of herself and her children.

If you are not well, I ought not to have writ you so much on such melancholy subjects;—if you are well and gay, they will serve as a contrast and do you good. Amidst all this variable weather we all continue well here. His Grace rides out every morning at six, (compared with your Spa hours that will make no figure,) my mother goes every now and then to sigh over the desolateness of London, and sometimes tugs me along with her, but it is really at present a detestable place, especially as Parliament-street has not advanced an inch this fortnight. Pray ask Mrs. Montagu what is become of Dr. Monsey; to be sure it would have been rather a shorter way to send and enquire of Lord Godolphin.

I am curious to know whether you have at Spa (as at all places of that sort here) any circulating bookseller: if you have I shall not wonder you have no time to write, for as his shop must contain the whole collected nonsense of Europe, it must be a temptation irresistible. We have a Lady a Julia . . . . . Mande-

Mandeville here, written by Mrs. Sheridan *, that has faults and excellencies enough to raise it above this denomination. Pray write soon.

Miss TALBOT to Mrs. CARTER.

Lambeth, *Aug.* 11, 1763.

I FEAR, dear Miss Carter, you will be gone from Spa before this Letter arrives there; however, it will overtake you in some part of your tour. When I received your last paquet I had the satisfaction of knowing I had a Letter and Note on the road to you, besides a million of remembrances sent by Mr. Arden. But after all, could you you find in your heart to leave l'amiable Baronne Allemande? I wish sincerely you could find out that Bath waters were better for her nerves than Spa, (I had still rather you could in conscience recommend the Dog and Duck, † just by us,) and bring her over to England with you. The description you give of her has had such effects as would make Mrs.

* It was written by Mrs. Brooke.

† A mineral spring in St. George's Fields, belonging to a tavern known by that sign.

Montagu, amid all her flaunting with Altesses, pale with envy. Such a conquest has Madame la Baronne made at so many hundred miles distance, as even her own humility would be proud of. We shall scarce forgive you if you leave Spa before she does, and not even then, if you do not settle a Correspondence with her; nay, I do not know whether I shall be quite satisfied with your taste, if you do not espouse some German Baron, in order to pass the remainder of your days in her neighbourhood. Do tell me what part of Germany she adorns. I have but two German friends, and for their sakes, because they are good girls, I wish them acquainted with her. You have not so much as told me her name *, nor whether she has a Baron or is an *aimable veuve*. I am impatient for another Letter—and how peevish shall I be if you are gone away from Spa, and write to me only about fine houses and prospects. But write about what you will, your Letters make me vastly important, et c'est a qui les aura le premier. As for Mrs. Montagu's, it would have heightened my importance beyond imagination, but in this point I was extremely honourable, resisted an almost irresistible temptation (for I actually did not shew

* Madame de Blum, of whom see more in Mrs. Carter's Letters from Spa.

it

it to Lord Hardwicke, who came hither just as I had received the paquet, and would have been peculiarly worthy of the confidence) and by the very next Post sent it away to Mrs. Vesey.

Aug. 10. What heads and hearts folks have at Spa! I have just received your's of the 31st, in which you talk to me of a belle Hollandoise and a Chanoinesse angelique, for neither of whom do I care, and say no more of la Baronne than if no such amiable being existed. I begin to suspect this is really the case, and that she is only un être d'imagination, whom you dreamt of on the inspiring brink of the Geronstere spring. The Archbishop says, No, you are only fallen in love with another woman, and the first is forgot. A pretty gentleman you will come home indeed, fi volage! But my mother, who loves variety, applauds you extremely for writing no more on one subject. 'Tis surely impossible that with so many French airs fresh imported (for Germany being by your account frenchified, I know nothing that can sober you, except you return through Holland,) 'tis impossible you can think of rusticating for some months on the Kentish coast. Take my advice, come directly to London, and play off all your coquetteries and minauderies for one week that we may see them in perfection; then go to Deal, and grow domestic again, and return in

spring just such as you used to be. That being beyond sea, and having once trod on French ground, you should come back without seeing Paris, is to me astonishing; or that being so apparelled as Mrs. Montagu describes, you should bear the thoughts of not being seen at Paris, is most exemplary. Too many English are there already, and French hotels are actually advertised in our newspapers.

If Princess Esterhasi saw two ladies I have in in my head at this minute as samples of English women, I do not wonder at her impatience to be introduced to the rest; but let her never come over, that she may never be undeceived. Dr. Monsey has twice exhibited himself here, and seems tolerably well. If newspapers reach Spa you will have been hurt at seeing the Archbishop mentioned in them as confined with a fit of the gravel. It was, I thank God, tolerably short and favourable, and he was quite well and riding out again before the newspapers made him ill. Two days' anxiety disagreed both with my mother and myself, but we are quite well again. No other event has varied our quiet life here, but the agreeable one of having had Mr. Berkeley with us for a few days; a friend that, whether in cheerful or melancholy hours, is always welcome, always useful; indeed I know no one of his years that is in

any

any degree comparable with him; yet, formed for the most important stations, he seems fated to live in a cottage *, which makes me peculiarly peevish just now, for that cottage is surrounded by the small-pox, so much to be apprehended for his wife and son. Pray thank Mrs. Montagu very much for permitting me to see your *true* character. I hope for a second part, as she who has so exquisitely described your preparations ought also to inform us what conquests they have made. I long also for a Letter from Cologne, because I have no notion what to expect or what motive carries you thither. May good angels guard you through all your Journies!

Miss TALBOT to Mrs. CARTER.

Lambeth, *Aug.* 23, 1763.

You kindly bid me write again to you, dear Miss Carter, as soon as possible, and I obey you as nearly as I can. I might indeed have writ the

* This very good and amiable man, son to the celebrated Bishop of Cloyne, was afterwards a Prebendary of Canterbury.

very

very night after I received your Letter, but I was too weary, and this is the next Post. Your's has no date, except that being writ a week after Mr. Comyn's arrival at Spa. I hope before this time you are satisfied of my having received your four Letters, and circulated that admirable one to Mrs. Vesey.

Had I writ to you on Saturday I should probably have mentioned to you Lord and Lady Egremont as people whom I had seen that day well and happy. Think but how I was struck (having chanced to see nobody on Sunday) with the fatal article in this day's paper. So instantaneous are the transitions from this false world's highest prosperity to its deepest distress! I am indeed most truly concerned—How will poor Lady Carpenter support this last stroke, so sunk as she was by the former? Yet the first person to grieve for is Lady Egremont; but I think she has, along with great feeling, great composedness of spirit, and thorough right principles, which with the care of her children, and tender attention not to give her mother additional distress, will help to support her. My Lord himself is I fancy a very great loss in public as well as private life.—'Tis a great satisfaction to me to recollect the proper manner in which he was affected by that amiable closing scene of Lord Tyrconnel, and that he has had above a year since to

be

be the better for it.—But I will dwell no longer on this affecting subject. You have so strong a sensibility for every sufferer, that one ought not to bring any melancholy scenes into your view. I wish I had writ on Saturday, for then my ideas were all cheerful. All here, I thank God, are well and happy still, and thankful one ought to be for every day's, for every hour's continuance of domestic comfort. We even propose to have one of our little concerts on Friday, though I do not love to look forward even through half a week to a day of cheerfulness, it so very seldom answers, even at the best. Fie upon me! I shall sink your spirits worse than the saddening water you began with at Spa, and which, by the way Mrs. Anne Pitt hopes you will conclude with, that you may drink yourself down to a proper pitch for mere English conversation.

I hope you will have a fair day to walk over the precipices you talk of.—It would really be much for my peace if all my friends would stay as quietly at home as I do in these sad seasons—but there are you and Mrs. Montagu ascending and descend ing mountains, fording torrents, and crossing seas —there is Lady Grey going wandering about the Peak—and sundry others dispersed in such various places, and engaged in such adventures, that it tires one to think of you all; nor is one easy in

seeing

seeing a storm blow over one's head, when one knows not on which of one's vagrant friends it is gone to burst. We had here on Friday noon the most solemnly alarming darkness I ever beheld, but, I thank God, the storm that ensued was not equal to the awful preparation. Never let me imagine again that I have a passion for the gloomy and the terrible, for this so affected my spirits that for a few minutes it almost took away my voice.

Lady Grey is as delighted as she ought both with the Peak and its enchanting environs. There is some sense in going *thither* in such a summer as this, but then it must be to stay the whole of it. As for people in foreign parts, the wisest thing they can do is to come home again to sweet England as fast as they can. I shall wish for a Letter from the Hague, but if you have not time to write, do not perplex yourself about it. If you would see an *aimable Hollandoise* enquire out Mademoiselle Barcel. I think I have no other friend in Holland but Sir Joseph Yorke. The best wishes of this house attend your journey and your return.

Miss TALBOT to Mrs. CARTER.

Lambeth, *Sept.* 22, 1763.

Welcome again, my dear Miss Carter, to your native land. Most sincerely I rejoice in your safe return, and shall disinterestedly enjoy the thoughts of your reposing at home, after so many fatigues, till January; though I dare say Mrs. Montagu, who has had you with her all this while, cannot help being unconscionable enough to grumble at not bringing you on directly with her. Could I have foreseen exactly when you would arrive at Dover, a Letter should have met you there, for I am greatly in your debt, and impatient to tell you how glad I am, both that you have taken this agreeable tour, and that you are happily come back. Out of your debt I shall never be, for I shall never have half so many pretty things to tell you as you have entertained us with all this summer. I am really ashamed of the insipid Letters I have sent you, for besides the unvaried scene and my own increasing dullness, I have felt genée when I have writ to you as one does when talking in a mixed company; because there was only one of your party except yourself whom I cared

cared for in the least, and even of that valuable *one* I am in awe. I know this is ridiculous, but now you are quite yourself again, I feel easy, and can write nonsense.

As much impatience as my insipidity admits of I shall really feel it till I see Mrs. Montagu, and indeed the more, as seeing her will enliven my stupidity, and make me more tolerable; but a foolish cold (not bad, and already mending,) will prevent my paying my respects to her, except by message, for some days; and though if I lived on t'other side of the Rhine, over that pretty bridge of boats, I might have hoped to see her, yet the habitual terrors of Lambeth, and its strange distance from London, will not allow me to flatter myself that I shall soon see her here.

All the wanderers for whom I was in pain are safe come home—all but Emin, who, by my last advices, was in June on the eve of entering la Grande Armenie. This and abundance more I could have told you some time ago, but un noble dépit made me determine not to name him till you was alone. Lady Grey has travelled through Worcestershire, Staffordshire, and Derbyshire, and met with no violent weather. Lady Margaret has been at Tunbridge, and is returned quite happy. The waters have strenghthened her nerves, and her spirits are composedly cheerful, so that she is

equal

equal either to solitude or a crowd; and my friend Sir G—— has behaved this whole summer with so much good sense and good-nature that he has quite won my heart. He had no inclination to the party, but when it was judged necessary for her health, he took for the whole season the best house there, with all its environs, entered cheerfully into every innocent amusement, fell into the best set of acquaintance—and is quite grown handsome.

Since I writ to you last the sickliness of the season has a little affected us here, but, I thank God, we are all quite well again. Both the Archbishop and my mother had bilious cholics, and were both ill at once, and then to be sure I was unhappy enough. My mother laid open some useful pages of your Epictetus, and I read them with profit. How shall I thank you for them? I know not how his Grace contrives it, but frequently (alas) as he has some complaint or other, they never seem to hinder him in any business, nor break in upon any engagement of importance.

I have begun riding again, and am the better for it. The Archbishop has almost *broke the neck* of my horse (for poor grey is grown stiff), and I have almost *broke the neck* of a new one, that seems quiet enough not to endanger my own, and will I believe do well enough.

A sad

A sad accident last week has grieved us all exceedingly. A scaffold set up over the gateway (which is repairing) fell down, and one poor honest man lost his life on the spot. Three others of the workmen were much hurt, but are, I trust, likely to do well, and even to be well soon. It was satisfaction to see how very much all the servants were affected; it is also a very great one to me that the poor unhappy man, whose fate was so sudden, was a remarkable good man.

"When God calls virtue to the grave,
Alike 'tis mercy soon or late,
Justice alike to kill or save."

The story in the Gazetteer about a dream is false. One of the men, who would otherwise have been on the fatal scaffold, had providentially (after a disturbed night, but not of *particular* dreams) a giddiness in his head that made him afraid to venture up.

I have seen Mrs. Mackenzie several times, and am heartily interested for her and her family. There is an openness of heart and a warmth of gratitude in her that I cannot help loving, and sometimes she looks and speaks *so* like her poor amiable sister! Carrie is grown a fine girl, and speaks with due gratitude of the kindness of the Dean of Ossory's

family

family to her. They know I can do them no service, yet 'tis with the utmost fighting and scolding that I can prevent them from filling my room with all manner of American curiosities and good things. They quite disdain me when I beg them to bestow their rarities where they may answer some future good purpose, which I know their situation needs. I hope I shall prevail about a most beautiful bird, which was presented to her by the Viceroy of Peru; it is the most lovely bird I ever saw, and is the only one that ever lived to come to this country. The Captain, it seems, had delighted himself with the thoughts of bringing it to Miss Douglas, that she might have the pleasure of giving it to me. I have heartily accepted their good-will, but absolutely refused the bird (my resolution being strengthened by my mother's) and suggested to them three persons, on any of whom it would be more properly by much, and more usefully bestowed; but she asks if I don't know how well he loved his sister, and vows, if I don't take it, it shall go to the cat. These good people vex me heartily, and yet I honour their principles, and for that reason have writ you this long story about them.

I hope you have found all well at home; 'tis now time to dismiss you to them, to your pretty apartment, and all your Greek and Latin authors, with whom you are you say to make up arrears. Adieu!

Thank

Thank God, you are again within a day's journey of me.

Mrs. CARTER to Miss TALBOT.

Deal, *Sept.* 29, 1763.

A thousand thanks to you, my dear Miss Talbot, for your very kind congratulations. I do indeed feel extremely happy in being set quietly down at home, and in finding, after so many weeks of absence, my family and friends at least as well and prosperous as I left them; a blessing for which, in a world liable to so many hourly changes, I cannot be sufficiently grateful. I am glad, as well as you kindly are for me, that I have taken this tour, which had every external circumstance to render it agreeable; but the state of my health, which was much worse than I ever mentioned to my friends in England, often rendered me absolutely incapable of enjoying the advantages of my situation. I thank God, I have been better in some respects since I came home, and I hope the absolute quiet in which I live at present will enable me to appear more comfortably to you in January than I could have done if my hurry had been continued by my coming

coming immediately to London. Mrs. Montagu is going into the north, so had no temptation to *grumbling;* but indeed I fancy if it had been otherwise, she must feel her spirits much lightened by getting rid of the poor languid animal, who has perplexed and alarmed her for so many weeks—but she was ready to beat me once for saying something like this to herself. I wish her journey into Northumberland was over, for I am afraid the frozen air of Newcastle will carry off much of the good effects of the Spa water. She has a bandbox of frippery to deliver to you, but she writes me word that the want of a post-chaise has prevented her yet being able to get to Lambeth.

I hope you have by this time perfectly got rid of your cold, and that you have all gone through the only trial you are to have of this sickly season. I felt extremely for you on hearing of the sad accident at Lambeth, as I know by experience what one suffers on such an occasion, by undergoing for a few minutes the same apprehensions when our house was repairing last year.

I rejoice with you on the return of all your wandering friends, and particularly on Sir G——'s beauty. I love and honour the Mackenzie's extremely; while I was at Spa I had a Letter from Mrs. Mackenzie, but do not know her direction, pray send it me. I begun a Letter to you while I

was at Calais, and finished it at Dover, when I desired it might be put into the Post. I hope you have received the said Letter; not that I can tell whether it was worth your reading, but I am as delicate about my nonsense as you are about your sense; though from hence forward they will not be so entertaining as they were from Germany, for there I had something else to talk of, and from hence I have nothing else to talk of but self, as dull a subject as heart can wish for. You are I know kindly interested enough in it to be pleased to hear that my apartment is extremely delightful to me; it is so clean, and so light, and so riant in every respect, that I am inexpressibly happy and thankful for it.

Miss TALBOT to Mrs. CARTER.

Lambeth, *Oct.* 1, 1763.

Indeed, my dear Miss Carter, I grieve to find you have suffered so severely all this last summer, and now long more than ever to see Mrs. Montagu to talk about you. But I foresee not when we are likely to meet. I have rid five days; this, the sixth, we went to Brentford, and all this

is

is wonderfully distant from seeing Mrs. Montagu. In some respects you say you are much mended; do tell me what particular complaint you have, for I sit and fancy fifty. I am very well myself, but hope to be a great deal better before I see you, for I am sometimes good for nothing—cowardly in the morning, with a stupid head and cold fingers—weary in the evening, and unfit to do any thing but read—wretched if I have a Letter to write, and never thoroughly alive till towards supper-time; I could then very cheerfully sit up till morning, write, read, discourse, or work very notably—however, as this would be somewhat disorderly, instead of sitting up and being alive, I take one sound nap of seven hours without waking, and could very contentedly sleep on till noon. Perhaps these symptoms indicate that I ought to pass this winter at Paris, where supper is the joyous time, and the hours suited to my present disposition. However, to-morrow I begin Spa water, and on this and my charming rough-trotting horse, I depend to make me receive you with comfortable looks. The physical book I am studying at present is a very pretty treatise, "sur la Gaieté," which the author recommends as essential to health, and as health is also essential to gaiety, he prescribes a proper regimen. One part of it I have long been in, for he advises above all things to avoid cards, large assemblies, routs,

and strings of engagements for a fortnight beforehand. These he very justly calls chains and shackles, *un art de s'ennüer*, painful studies, and *assujettissemens:* 'tis a very pretty book. Talking of books, I must tell you in what a large one you have engaged me—Dr. Jortin's Life of Erasmus. I know you will wonder how *I* could be tempted to read any thing of *his*, considering how widely (I thank God) we differ in some points; but in good truth, in this book, so far as I have gone, I have been very much pleased with him in many places, and found a candour that I did not expect. And now you must know how all this came about *.

I do not please to keep a quarrel in my hands of all things, so pray take it up yourself; but to enable myself to form some judgment of the goodness of your cause, I enquired for a Life of Erasmus, and have got two thick quartos. I am as yet quite open to conviction on either side, though I am inclined to think the best reasons are your's; however, if you will accept of me for a mediatrix, I will read on to qualify myself for that honour.

I am really in some pain for myself, being got amongst such an odd set of authors. On my table lies a volume of "Contes Morales," and our after-

* See page 257 of Mrs. Carter's Memoirs, quarto edition.

supper

supper book is Hume—his English history however; but I hear it with infinite caution, and I have half a dozen excellent French books by way of antidote to them all. At present our history is interrupted, Dr. and Mrs. Potter being here. Next week Dr. and Mrs. Secker and charming Nancy come for about a week; then Mr. and Mrs. Benson and little fat Matt.

By this you may see the Archbishop is very well. The poor men that were hurt are almost well, and getting to work again. I grieve as you will do for poor Miss Knatchbull. So we both do I dare say for Miss Trevor, though unknown to us both. Alas, what affecting scenes does every day produce! But 'tis a duty not to let them sink too deep on our minds. I rejoice your apartment is so riant, and all your friends so prosperous. That every prosperity may attend you, with health to enjoy it, is the most earnest wish of, &c.

Mrs. CARTER to Miss TALBOT.

Deal, *Oct.* 4, 1763.

*I am not all satisfied with the account you give me of yourself, but am very glad you are going to drink Spa water, which is an admirable remedy for all nerves but such perverse ones as mine, which were convulsed to a strange degree while I was abroad; but I thank God they are so much mended at present that you need be under no manner of concern about me.

Is your Treatise on Gaiety a poem? If it is I believe I know it—Pray amongst your French studies have you met with a refutation of Rousseau's Emile? It is in many parts admirably well writ, and with great strength of argument; but the effect is sometimes unhappily weakened by the mixture of popish doctrines.—Probably you have seen Rousseau's answer to the Archbishop of Paris's *mandement* against Emile. There are sometimes so many right things blended with Rousseau's very dangerous errors, that I suppose there are few authors whom it is so difficult to answer in a proper

* See the beginning of this Letter, page 258 Mrs. Carter's Memoirs; quarto edition.

way.

way. But I beg your pardon for talking of errors and refutations. You talk of going to Paris; and at Paris suppers, Jean Jaques Rousseau is the standing toast. Your study of Hume's History will be a powerful recommendation there, for I am told the French consider him as the most exalted genius of the English nation.

I will write to Mrs. Mackenzie as soon as my head will give me leave; but I dare not provoke it by writing much at a time, for I have as many difficulties about a Letter as those which you describe in yourself. I am indeed heartily grieved for poor Miss Knatchbull, whose great sensibility will make her deeply feel this blow. She did not arrive in town time enough to see Sir Wyndham* alive. Indeed if she had, it might in such sad circumstances have been an aggravation of her distress.

I am afraid this untoward weather has stopped your rides, but if you have chanced to see Mrs. Montagu in the mean time, I shall be in more charity with the wind and rain. Happily no mischief has been done in the Downs, though it was excessively stormy for two days and nights. You did

* Her brother; a Kentish Baronet, of an ancient and very respectable family, of which the present representative, Sir Edward, is now, for the fourth time, one of the members for that county.

not

not tell me in what manner Emin was preparing to make his appearance in Armenia, whether alone, or at the head of an army.

Miss TALBOT to Mrs. CARTER.

Lambeth, *Oct.* 30, 1763.

I should not write to you, dear Miss Carter, this evening, because I am a little tired, and not in a clever writing humour; but having taken up the life of Erasmus to dose, it has just reminded me that I told the Archbishop yesterday I would write to you by this Post. He bid me tell you he will renew your lease; but your fine does not satisfy him, so he will not take it *. I thought I must not delay giving you this notice, that you may consider how high you will bid, for you see how he wants to screw you up.

Oh dear, and now another idea jumps into my head, which some family broils I had just been trying to compose amongst the Cynderaxes, had totally obliterated. Your band box of——elegance (tis *you* not *I* that call it frippery) I received on

* i. e. His Grace kindly made Mrs. Carter a present of it.

Sunday

Sunday morning, and had like to have thrown it at the man's head, for by seeing *that* I was convinced I should *not* see Mrs. Montagu; and had set my heart upon seeing her for many reasons, and principally to ask questions about you. But she is gone into Northumberland, and writes as if she was well and in spirits. The Archbishop saw Lord Bath at St. James's, and their whole conversation was about you.

The only travelled lady I have seen is my cousin, and indeed she is returned from Paris such honest English as would do your heart good. She resisted all temptations of buying fine silks for little money, nor would even at Paris put on a bit of rouge.—But pray have you not exceeded my commission? and how much am I in your debt above the solitary guinea? The assortment is quite magnifique, and admirably calculated to set off my red sattin, which I am sure you had in your eye. I have my doubts about the bouquet and aigrette, but the rest will do exactly, and I am very much obliged.

But now a more important subject comes into my mind. If I have been guilty of any sort of treachery in shewing a few of your Letters, I heartily beg your pardon, and will never do so again. I did not look upon it as such, from reasons that will make us some day or other a very amusing conversation, but would look too ridiculous upon paper.

paper. In truth I do not see why one may not shew to proper persons such parts of Letters as are on general and indifferent subjects, where they will probably give pleasure to the reader, (and speaking of your's) improvement too, besides the credit they do the writer. To eat a whole fine peach one's-self, is a greediness I never had an idea of, and I seriously looked on this as no more than helping my friends to a slice of the best I had.

How is Emin to enter Armenia? I have just writ to know, but I should fancy by no means alone. The Archbishop never heard any thing amiss of Erasmus's morality (his wretched cowardice excepted) nor knows of more than one very faulty expression in his writings, and wishes to know what stories of him you allude to. Adieu!

Mrs. CARTER to Miss TALBOT.

Deal, *Oct.* 15, 1763.

I EXCEEDINGLY honour your cousin for her unsophisticated English. I believe that whole party is a credit to our country, at least I know two other ladies in it who formed the same resolutions which she has so nobly kept, and I hope to hear the

the same account of them. I am told that numbers of the English who have flocked to Paris this year, have found themselves much disappointed, and have greatly disliked the manner of living there. I am mighty glad they find so little to attach their inclinations. It may prevent a world of mischief in every other respect.

I am immoderately scandalized at your asking what you are indebted for the band-box. How could such a shabby question enter your head? It is not the thing which you bid me buy, nor could I meet with any thing at Spa of that kind, your conscience may be perfectly easy that it will not ruin me, for upon my word the whole assortment did not cost a guinea. It is all so very sober and decent, that I think you need have no manner of scruple about the bouquet and aigrette.

To be sure there is something very plausible in what you say about eating a fine peach by one's-self; but that is no reason why one may not very allowably devour a whole turnip, if it was as big as one's head. However I am content to wait for your defence till I can hear it by your fire-side.

It is more from the testimony of others than from any recollection of my own, that I had formed the idea that Erasmus was in some parts of his works a very indecent writer. His Moriæ Encomium, I believe is very exceptionable in this respect. It

It is I believe more than thirty years since I read his dialogues, and then only those which were pointed out to me.—God forbid that I should be so wickedly uncharitable as to set all down for bad people whom human weakness may occasionally betray into very great faults. But I always find it hard to persuade myself that any person with real and affecting principles of religion can coolly and deliberately *write* in any immoral way. All that I know of the life of Erasmus is from what I have picked up in conversation, in which I have heard him described as a careless bon vivant, (this was the expression) and something was added about the manner of his administering his duty in his parish, the particulars of which I have forgot; but I remember that it hurt me, as something very particularly inconsistent with the character of one who attempted reformations in religion. I heartily wish that the life which you are reading may fully vindicate his character from every aspersion, for I shall be as glad to admire him as Lord Royston himself can be *.

I hope Mrs. Montagu has got well through all the Northern floods, but I have not had a line from her since she left London.

* See Miss Talbot's answer to this, page 259, Mrs. Carter's Memoirs; quarto edition.

Miss TALBOT to Mrs. CARTER.

Lambeth, *Nov.* 1, 1763.

FAIN would I write you a line, my dear Miss Carter, this Post, because it is shamefully long since I have writ to you at all. But though I was up to day a good while before the sun, I fear my day will prove too short to accomplish it. A series of occupations and companies having filled up my time till it wants a bare quarter of nine. Yet I am not one bit weary, and indeed it would be worth your while to come up by the machine one day, though you were to fly back in it the next, to see how well your friend is, and how stout, that was so far from both four years ago. I must not expect the same degree of stoutness to continue, when by the change of season riding shall have been long interrupted: but let me with gratitude to that admirable exercise acknowledge, that having now for two months persevered in it at the rate of five days in the week; I feel the same alacrity of spirits that I fancied only Tunbridge or Spa waters could bestow.

Nov. 2. Of the busy London world I have seen little, having been there but twice this last month. And in truth I begin to wish I could be as free from

hearing

hearing of it. This day has produced an event which I am very sorry for; its causes I know not, and some of its consequences I am afraid to foresee, as I imagine it too likely that none of the family will now be continued in any places they can quit; and on their wisdom, and moderation, and integrity, and public spirit I have had great dependance. True, however, it is, that the Attorney General * has resigned to-day. Were we together au coin du feu I would groan on for an hour, but to write lamentations would only weary us both! To my very great comfort Lord Hardwicke, who has had a long and alarming confinement, from the bilious cholic that has gone about, is recovering.

Lady Robert enquired much after you yesterday. She looks very handsome, and is as excellent as ever. The Mackenzies were here last night: he seems a plain sensible honest man, and if he could get a ship I should grumble less. How comes Nancy Richardson to be married at last, and Mr. Rivington never to tell me a word about it? But I *fore*told it last spring, she looked so spruce, and so fair, and so smiling. I enclose you transcripts relating to one who is more of a hero than good Erasmus, but to whom I could heartily wish two or three of Erasmus's munificent friends and patrons.

* Mr. Charles Yorke.

Return

Return the papers if you please, for I took no other copies. I do long to have one more remittance sent him *over Aleppo* unasked.

I have been journeying this morning all over Bloomsbury—no small undertaking—no mortal at home. For very weariness and idleness I stopped and lounged away half an hour at Mrs. Paulins, and was well enough amused. Mrs. Mackenzie has been here since with the good news that her husband is to have a third rate at Plymouth. She has heard it doubted in town whether the Attorney General has resigned, so don't take it on my authority, I believed it yesterday because every body said so, to-day I am very glad to doubt it, because I wish it may not be true.

Miss TALBOT to Mrs. CARTER.

Lambeth, *Nov.* 28, 1763.

I HAVE long owed you my thanks, dear Miss Carter, for enclosing to me that sweet melancholy sonnet*, which as you kindly sent me in con-

* Probably those verses first printed in the quarto edition of Mrs. Carter's Poems, which begin, "While pensive memory." They were on the death of Miss Louisa Poyntz—

fidence

fidence I have shewn to no one but my mother. I wish you would grant me an exception for Lady Margaret, as I know it would please her, and she peculiarly at present needs every little help. I have not seen her this long long while, for she is still at Northend, and comes to Grosvenor Square every morning. The Dean of Lincoln and her beloved sister in law are still with her, but I fear this long anxious suspence will do away all the good effects of Tunbridge. For several days past Lord Hardwicke has had few alarming symptoms, but every day diminishes his strength, and gives more fears than hopes: those who attend him hope still, and I sometimes flatter myself that so valuable a life will still be spared to a country which so much wants such a true friend as he has always been to it. All you say of him is most perfectly just. Had he been taken off by a sudden stroke, one should have felt the shock severely; yet there is something peculiarly painful in the thought of such a one lying ill and inactive so long; though as I hope and dare say he makes the right and best improvement of these first tedious hours he ever knew, this is probably best for him, as well as for those nearest friends who by alternate hopes and fears are thus gradually weaned from the happiness to which they have been so long accustomed.

Thank

Thank God my spirits and my health are so good that I can now take a solitary walk in the long gallery with a single candle, and be almost as much pleased with my reveries as I used to be in a walk of the same kind at Cuddesden; only from the various avocations of this house I have not time to indulge it near so long. This *capability*, however, of being pleased again with a lonely winter evening walk I reckon a very good sign, as I could never attain to it here till this year. I propose still more pleasure in walking there with you early in spring, during the time that (remember you are engaged) you spend with us in your way to town. I believe I shall never find the time to put on your ornaments; for I do not foresee one dinner or one evening party, but I will dress *a quatre epingles* to receive you.

I have been often in town but seen very few persons, except Lady Grey, Mrs. J. Yorke who is a very amiable woman, and Mrs. Mackenzie. Lady Robert lies in, and Lord Robert is just getting out of a fit of the gout. My mother and I were much pleased the other day with a new and volunteer visitor whom it seems you knew somewhat of at the Hague. I know not what was her name, but you saw her at Count Bentinck's whose youngest son she has since married, and is come over with him.

him. The message you was so good as to leave with her for Mademoiselle Bercel has produced for me from her the kindest of all polite Letters, which indeed gave me great pleasure, as I had quite taken an affection for her, and took it for granted she had quite forgot me, as well she might. The only thing I dislike in this Letter is the necessity of answering it, for my aversion to writing (except to you and one or two more) continues as strong as ever.

This morning I have been much delighted with hearing the praises of your friend Miss Bouverie*: it makes one feel quite rich to know that there are such characters in the world, and that they have a power of doing good in some degree proportionable to their will. One had need have some comfort of this sort, considering how frequently one has occasion to groan over characters that disgrace a country which as yet calls itself Christian.—How long it will do so I know not, since I find the author of the most execrable performance that ever saw the sun is still popular, not only amongst the mob, but even amongst the sober citizens. I have been reading French books lately that represent us as a nation of infidels. The specimens we most com-

* Mrs. Bouverie of Teston, Kent. A lady of most exemplary and truly Christian character.

monly

monly send abroad, and the books they most commonly get from hence, give too much colour to this most injurious and abominable opinion.

Charles Poyntz dined here yesterday, he is quite plump. He has been at Bruxelles where Mrs. Poyntz, who, he says, is excessively well, spends the winter with her grand-daughter. He says it is a very agreeable place to live in, though merely passing through it appeared to you so uncomfortable. Miss Bishop the maid of honour is to marry Sir George (Lovelace) Warren. Shall I send your subscription copy of the Messiah, or keep it till you come? I admire many things in it extremely, but am grievously hurt and disappointed at many more. I wish Dr. Young had been the translator, and I the correctress. Nancy Richardson is not married nor likely to be—The paragraph in the news belonged to some other Miss Richardson.

Mrs. CARTER to Miss TALBOT.

Deal, *Dec.* 5, 1763.

I have not the least objection, my dear Miss Talbot, to your shewing the verses * to Lady

* See the note, p. 77.

Margaret, as she will not be likely to talk about them, which I believe you would think not to be proper, as Mrs. Poyntz would not venture to shew them to Lady Spencer: and yet if they are capable of producing any effect, I think it is not such a one as would have done her hurt. I am obliged to you for mentioning my Lord Hardwicke's health, about which nobody I believe who has the honour of being personally acquainted with him is more solicitous, and I watch every newspaper for an account of him. That diminution of strength does not denote a recovering state: but we will hope a good constitution will at last bring him well through this attack. Never indeed did the blessing of such a life appear to be more necessary to the public than at present.

I shall be happy in your admitting me to partake your walks in the long gallery; your reveries you will then I hope communicate. Indeed I do remember I am engaged to you in my way to town, and should have been exceedingly mortified if you had forgot it. I hope to be there early in next month, but cannot exactly fix the day, as my sister is from home, and does not return till Friday.

I think you will be pleased with Madame Bentinck; she was married before we were at the Hague. I shall wait on her as soon as I get to town, and if you should see her, I beg you will be so good as to make my compliments to her:

upon

upon condition, however, that no such evil consequences may arise therefrom as followed my exact discharge of your commission to Mademoiselle Bercel. To be sure in all equity I ought to take the burden of one half of your answer to her Letter, as one half of my diligence arose from the vanity of talking about you.

As you love great objects, I think you must have taken a view of the river last Friday, as I did of the sea which was extremely sublime. The tide was amazingly high here, especially as it was not arrived to the spring. If it had, I know not whether all the buildings on the beach might not have been utterly demolished. The damage even now is computed at about £500; several ships were driven from their anchors, but I don't hear that any were lost. The house in which we lived last year has been greatly damaged: this in which we are at present is farther from the sea, and has suffered no other inconvenience than having every thing set a swimming about the cellar. The violence of the tide was the more remarkable, as the wind, though pretty high, could not be called a storm. I believe it must have been much stronger in London, for I have not heard of any mischief done here by land. My sister was on her journey home that day, and as she came through Stroud, boats were rowing

along the streets. She longed exceedingly to get into one of them, as a safer voiture than the coach. She was in more danger in walking from my uncle's to the machine, from the falling of tiles and chimneys; and it was happy for me that I knew nothing of the storm there, till after I saw her, thank God, safely arrived through it.

I will not trouble you to send me Klopstock's poem *, as I hope so soon to come and fetch it; I enquired the character of it amongst the Germans, and they talked of it, as in general absolutely unintelligible. Did not I subscribe for two copies? Be so good as to pay the second for me, and trust me till I see you.

Your French books, which represent us as a nation of infidels, ought at the same time to own how much theirs contribute to make us so; I am told that whenever any of our young men go to Paris, the pert half-thinkers there, who are dignified with the title of Philosophers (helas la pauvre philosophie) seize on them, and stuff their poor empty heads with their detestable notions.

Have you read Mrs. Macaulay's history? I have seen only some extracts from it, which seemed to be writ with strength and spirit. As Sir George

* The Messiah, mentioned before.

Lovelace

Lovelace is provided with one maid of honour, it is to be hoped Captain Grosvenor's merits will entitle him to another.

Miss TALBOT to Mrs. CARTER.

Rochester, *Jan.* 31, 1764.

I know, my dear Miss Carter, that you will be glad of this line to tell you that, thank God, we are safe and well at Rochester, and my mother not tired with her pleasant journey. But she is very penitent for having in discourses with you spoke slightingly of so beautiful a country. We found here his Grace's coach and a Letter that satisfies us we have done right in coming. He writes very cheerfully, but the gout in his foot seems likely to make a long visit, and even to threaten both feet. I am sure he needs every relief that the sight and little cares of friends used to him can give him. We have been favoured with the loveliest travelling day that ever was, and our coachman, &c. performed admirably. I wish you was here now, as you might return with them commodiously to-morrow, and this morning I had scarce time or

spirits

spirits to be much the better (though the better indeed we both were) for your very kind visit. I hope it did not make your poor head worse. Pray send us all manner of news. And now, my dear friend, good night. I shall scarce have time to write to you to-morrow.

Mrs. CARTER to Miss TALBOT.

Clarges Street, *Feb.* 3, 1764.

Two days of sunshine were particularly chearing to me, my dear Miss Talbot, from the hope that they enlivened your journey to Canterbury, where I long to hear that you were safely arrived before the return of disheartening weather last night. I hope the Kentish roads afforded Mrs. Talbot no opportunity of walking into the middle of the coach. As I trust all your apprehensions and fatigues of the journey are by this time happily over, I rejoice to think on the cordial which I am sure your arrival must convey to his Grace, and which notwithstanding all your scruples, I am persuaded he took without making one wry face.

I dined

I dined yesterday with Mrs. Montagu, with Lord Bath, Lord Lyttelton and Sir James Macdonald, I know not whether I ever mentioned to you this very extraordinary young man.—He is not twenty-one, yet has an understanding so formed, and such variety of knowledge as is really astonishing. His manners are pleasing, and he does not discover the least degree of pertness or presumption. He is sovereign of the Isle of Skey, which he has formed a scheme to improve and civilize. That he may the better carry his point, he has set himself to learn the Erse language, which he understands perfectly well. This gave me an opportunity of asking some questions about the translation of Ossian, which Sir James affirmed to be inferior to the original. I asked if Mr. Macpherson had not made some embellishments in the epithets; but this he absolutely denied.

As to news, notwithstanding the papers did with great gravity assure the public, that the H. P.* did not visit Mr. P.; I do venture to assure you, from incontestible authority, that the H. P. did

* The hereditary Prince of Brunswick Lunenbourgh, who had married the Princess Augusta, sister to his Majesty, on the 16th of January preceding. Mr. P. is probably meant for Mr. Pitt, afterwards Lord Chatham. The D. of N., Duke of Newcastle. The other initials are perhaps for Grafton, Portland, Bedford, Rockingham, and Devonshire.

most

most certainly visit Mr. P. His H. went in a hired post-chaise with Mr. De Feronce. Before they came to the house the P. (in English) bid the chaise stop, opened the door himself, and jumped out, and then walked slowly, bowing, through a lane of the people of the village to the house; he staid about an hour. On the day when the P. visited the Duke of N. the Duke had made a dinner in honour of the wedding, for the Dukes of D. G. P. B. Lord R. and other chiefs of the war-kettle, in number about twenty. The Duke of N. presented the Duke of D. and, I think, the others to the P.; when his H. went away, the twenty accompanied him, chapeau bas, through the rain quite to his coach. Very pathetic are the lamentations made over the P. and Pr". on their distresses in the road to Harwich. It seems Lord A. had desired the honour of entertaining them, but nothing was accepted but his house. Care was to be taken of all the rest. Such care was taken, that when the Princes arrived at midnight at W—. as dark, and as cold, and as hungry belike as Princes might be, they found neither candle, nor fire, nor food. I tell you all I pick up, but very probably this last may be a minority invention.

So much for public affairs. And now I am going to tell you what perhaps you are not much used to hear, a good thing of your right honourable cousin.

cousin. Mrs. Bargrave and the Miss Lynches were overturned one day last week returning from the play. The glasses were up and broke to shivers, but providentially they received no other hurt, than cutting their cloaths and being extremely frightened. In the midst of their distress Lord Talbot happened to come by, and with great humanity and politeness walked home himself, and insisted on the ladies taking his coach, for their own had lost a wheel. I think I have now told you all the public and private news I have heard since I saw you. I dined yesterday and spent an agreeable day with Mrs. Boscawen. To-day I am going to Mrs. Montagu. Pray write soon; and be very careful of yourselves, for I am well acquainted with the climate of Canterbury churchyard.

Mrs. CARTER to Miss TALBOT.

Clarges Street, *Feb.* 6, 1764.

I am delighted, my dear Miss Talbot, to find you arrived so safe and well at Canterbury, and that his Grace is better. I think I have not picked

picked up any intelligence for you in my travels through the cities of London and Westminster, since I wrote last. I would fain take advantage of your absence and be very civil to the rest of the world, but it rains so perpetually, and the streets are so impracticable that I cannot walk. However my comfort is, that I shall not long be under the necessity of either staying at home, or being draggled to the neck in dirty streets. The bon ton at Paris is *furieusement* to have every thing *a la Grecque*. It must necessarily be the ton in London too, and as no fine gentlemen can be happy without a wife a la Grecque, I expect soon to have my choice of the most splendid parties; for though I am not Minerva, I may make my fortune very prettily as her owl. Only think what a number of duels will be fought about me, and how many targets battered into cullenders! When I have enjoyed the triumph of a few dozens of these rencontres, I propose before the fashion varies to take the richest survivor, flourish down to breakfast with you in a post chaise and six, and return to town time enough for the opera.

Mr. Wilkes's post chaise and two servants landed at Deal last week; one of his servants said that his master's wound was perfectly healed. I lately heard that Churchill, within two years, has got 3500*l.* by his ribbald scribbling. Happy age of virtue

virtue and genius, in which Wilkes is a patriot, and Churchill a poet! I have just heard that there was a squabble yesterday in the House of Commons. Sir Wm. Meredith made a motion, that the warrants for apprehending Wilkes should be laid before the House. He was seconded by Sir. G. Saville: opposed by Mr. Grenville and the Attorney General. Mr. Conway and Lord G. Sackville spoke particularly well. In some minority motion which was unexpected, your Bristol friend *l'amiable scelerat*, sent in all haste to a neighbouring tavern to enquire whether there were any members, and to desire they would come to the House. There did happen to be two who came immediately, and they were both of the minority.

Feb. 9.

Two days head-ache must account for the delay of this, and for not having yet heard that the yatches are arrived any where. During the supper at Witham the Princess appeared out of spirits, on which the Prince said, " Eh qu'avez vous dont ma chére princesse? est ce que vous manquez vos *gardes*. Nous sommes tous egaux ici. Mais consolez vous, quand vous serez a B. vous en aurez. The Princess laughed and grew very cheerful. I think I have repeated the words exactly as I heard them: and I have some reason to think they were

really

really spoken. Various and very ingenious have been the political inventions of every day. The minority to have a fair pretence for hanging the ministry, have sunk the yatch and drowned the Prince and Princess. The majority on their side, have choaked the Duke of C. by fat and a dropsy. I hope it is as certain that the Prince, &c. are safely landed in spite of being drowned, as that the Duke rode out after he was killed. From the H. of C. to the basket women in St. James's market is no such fall as will hazard one's neck. These ladies have been most intemperately vociferous in their wishes, that all who sent the Prince and Princess away in such weather were in their places. The Marriage Act is to be examined by a Committee of the whole House on Wednesday. I have this moment heard the good news that the yatches are arrived at Helvoet, one of them sprung a mast. I have now told you all the news of every sort I can collect, so adieu. I go on piano piano with my history of the Incas.

Miss TALBOT to Mrs. CARTER.

Canterbury, *Feb.* 12, 1764.

Many thanks to you, dear Mrs. Carter, for your delightful Letter; you who are a town lady cannot comprehend the delight it is to receive such an amusing Letter, and the dreadful blank Monday evening brings, no Letters, no papers. The air of Canterbury seems to agree with us, we are hungry all day long; but as to your streets they will reconcile me to Southwark, or any of the vilest parts of London. The noble cathedral is as yet forbidden ground. We were at Burgate church yesterday, and much delighted with the melody of the clerk, and the sweet looks and obliging behaviour of Miss Comyns, whom my mother judges to be one of your friends by her countenance. We admire the Kentish countenances and complexions very much, and liked the country people all the way down.

I brought with me Hurd's Dialogues on Education, which have entertained his Grace very well, and a silly harmless story book called Maria, which serves to entertain myself at minutes when I am fit for nothing else. I see a new translation from

from the Italian, which, if pretty, desire Mr. Rivington to send me, and likewise Paradise Restored, by—I forget who; or in short any thing new and entertaining, as I cannot pretend even to guess how long we may be detained here: but such a fit will not allow of travelling along that hilly, though beautiful road, in less than ten days or a fortnight, though his Grace begins to use one hand a little. Dr. and Mrs. Potter are the kindest and best people I ever met with, and I shall love them as long as I live. I thank you for telling me so good a thing of my cousin, and rejoice the ladies were not hurt. Your third story I believe, as you say, cannot be absolutely true. The cooks and the victuals might be gone to bed; but I am very sure they went from London two days before. Mrs. Potter met your brother and Mrs. Carter yesterday between Mr. Nairns and Sir G. Oxendon's, they chatted a good while and seemed vastly well. I have a scheme if the road is good, to drive one day to Whitstable, and look at that noblest of (I must not say terrestrial) objects the sea.

It is the etiquette at this house to send away the Letters before the Post comes in, so if I am any thanks in your debt for a Letter that is coming I cannot help it: besides I owe you, for a hundred reasons, so many already, that over shoes, over boots,

boots, may well be my consolation. This Letter is not at all a la Grecque, and by the way I want much explanation of this Paris fashion. It may prove a lucky one for poor honest Nectarius, who would be mighty glad of a few scholars among the fine ladies and gentlemen.

Mrs. CARTER to Miss TALBOT.

Deal, *May* 12, 1764.

After a journey attended with no other inconvenience than heat, confinement, and want of air, I got to Canterbury, my dear Miss Talbot, by four o'clock, but I was too ill to go on, so begged a bed of Miss Blomer, and next day Dr. Lynch kindly took me as far as Sandwich, from whence I walked to my own comfortable home, where I found all my family and friends well, and glad to see me. Whatever Mrs. Talbot may think of my quiet life here, I assure you I have been in a bustle ever since I arrived. We had company to breakfast (at which her cake made a flourishing figure), and we are to dress and go out to dinner; but I have found a spare minute to plant some tuberoses

tuberose and set some bits of leonurus and geranium, which I pilfered at Lambeth, and which I shall nurse with as much care, at least, as you do the ἰχθυδιον and the pusses. The little kitten was up and dressed and quite ready to take leave of me when I came down stairs on Thursday morning.

Adieu, my dear Miss Talbot, my best respects attend his Grace and Mrs. Talbot, with my most grateful thanks to them and you, I am, &c.

Miss TALBOT to Mrs. CARTER.

Lambeth, *June* 13, 1764.

I rejoice to hear, dear Miss Carter, of your safe arrival at Deal; I was a good deal disturbed for you during the thunder and rain that fell the day you had so hastily devancé le jour to get away from us; but I consoled myself you could have nothing half so terrible as Hedge Lane, which most wickedly stands in the way between me and some very necessary visits; but I will find a way to avoid *it* and not neglect *them*, it is a duty we owe to society, and as such it shall be paid.

paid. Yesterday we called at the Asylum. I do not go thither to-morrow because I will not indulge my love of a public place under the mask of going to church—neither do I much wish to hear in a chapel a hymn to a guardian angel. Well, but I am much pleased with the orderly air of the place, with the health, diligence and cheerfulness in the looks of the children, and with Mrs. Maxwell and her pretty little girl. I am so very lazy that I am absolutely ashamed even to think of it, for I am in perfect health and good spirits, but I do not ride, I do not write, nor indeed do one half of the things I used to do, and yet for the life of me I cannot in any almanack, however old, find that the twenty-four hours, were one minute longer than they are now. Indeed to me they consisted of some more waking hours, for I rose a good deal earlier, but I would be content to sleep a due proportion of hours in the night, if I did not likewise dream on all day. The ABP. and my mother are gone for a ride, and for a wonder no visitors dropping in (for they do drop one by one from the moon most wonderfully). I have had a fine two hours at my own disposal. I first made up a medicine for Joyce, and carried it to her; then visited Molly Johnson, who ten days ago gave us a little gardener—then took a short cold walk in the garden with a book, and now here I am writing to my good friend this examen

du conduite, if not, de conscience, but I think they are much the same. The time poor ιχθυδιον used so quietly to steal from me will for the future be my own. The poor little animal died two days ago, and I am ashamed to tell the translator of Epictetus, or any other reasonable being, how uncomfortable I felt the day or two that it was evidently sick and helpless. The little thing knew me so well, so constantly came to my finger and looked me in the face, and I was so used to feed it, give it fresh water, and make it look glad, and Mrs. Gover's lamentations were so pathetic, that no philosophy could stand it.

Charing Cross has long been barred up, and till very lately that a way has been opened through Spring Gardens, the going to town has been immoderately disagreeable. I intended to have called on Mrs. Montagu, but have not been able to get so far. I hear, and rejoice in it, that you are certainly going to Tunbridge; you will find Lady Margaret Heathcote there, who peculiarly sets her heart upon your coming, and bid me tell you so. Supper-bell rings, so good night.

Mrs. CARTER to Miss TALBOT.

Deal, *June* 30, 1764.

I ought to have thanked you before, dear Miss Talbot, (but an aching head has prevented me) for the edifying account you sent me from Lambeth. I was glad to find you resisted the temptation of going to the Asylum, beause it might have been too crouded and too hot; not because I am convinced of the justice of your most extraordinary scruple about it. Surely such a scruple belongs only to people who never go to church but upon such occasions.—Yet into the heads of those people no such scruples enter. I feel more force in your objection to a hymn to a guardian angel in a chapel. A guardian angel is a most seducing poetical object; but there seems to be something strangely inconsiderate in admitting such a hymn into a place of public worship.

My sister Douglas is moved into her new house, which to me appears dreary, because it has no prospect; but I ought to consider that it is not a prospect that constitutes happiness; for this riant airy situation which so much delights me, had no charms for her, and she, like many other people, can be happy without the view of a fine landscape

gilded by the rising and the setting sun. After all, am not I prodigiously happy in Clarges Street, where to be sure one's happiness does not depend *absolutely* on a prospect?

If you were, as you certainly are not, like most other folks, I should have thought you had brought a charge of laziness against yourself, for no other reason but to shew how well you could confute it. If the rest of your day has as much to say for it as the two hours of which you gave me the specimen, I think your conscience may be very easy. As to the time which is stolen away by your visitors, it is certainly no affair of your's, for I do not know that any mere terrestrial virtue is engaged to get the better of attacks from the moon. As unphilosophical, and as unreasonable as you represent it, I could not for the heart of me help feeling sorry for the poor ιχθυδιον. It was perfectly unnecessary that you should make any apology to me for your not being detestably wise.

I am very much obliged by the honour of Lady Margaret Heathcote's message; but I am not likely to derive any advantage from it at Tunbridge. For though you tell me, and Mrs. Montagu, and Lord Bath; and, in short, every body else tells me that I am going thither, I am far enough from being convinced that any such thing will ever happen. There are certainly inducements enough to make me

me wish I could be of the party; but there are, I think, invincible reasons to prevent it.

Miss TALBOT to Mrs. CARTER.

Lambeth, *July* 10, 1764.

It is like yourself, dear Miss Carter, to fly to the relief of a friend, and I only beg you will contrive to be yourself as little the worse as possible, for the comfort you bring to others. It really enlivened me to see your hand in a twisted note, and I should be most heartily glad of your return to town, if I was not most sincerely sorry for the occasion*. As soon as you are a little rested, and can spare time, it will do you a great deal of good to come and breathe this air of roses and jessamines. I will not call on you till the present painful suspence is past, nor attempt for a moment to take you away from Mrs. Montagu. Let me have a line to say you are well, and your friend not worse.

* This occasion was the alarming and dangerous illness of Mrs. Montagu.

Miss

Miss TALBOT to Mrs. CARTER.

Lambeth, *Aug.* 17, 1764.

It is abominable of me not to have writ to you all this while, my dear Miss Carter, though I am sensible when I indulge this laziness I am, in the vulgar phrase, nobody's enemy but my own. Having just been engaged in self-defensive combat with a gnat, I am tempted to transcribe one of Mr. Shenstone's maxims, that was certainly writ for your reading, and that pleased even me.—"One should not destroy an insect, one should not quarrel with a dog, without a reason sufficient to vindicate it through all the courts of morality." How I grieve for your country excursion this bad day, and poor Mrs. Hume, who is on the top of Malvern Hill, of which, and the country round it, she has writ me a most beautiful description: you indeed are not so much to be pitied, because you are with one who can brighten the dullest scene; as for us, a showery summer is a treat, it makes the environs of London so extremely beautiful, and London itself tolerable. I had a long walk yesterday with Bishop Newton*, who talks of the friend you have lost,

* The learned and respectable Bishop of Bristol, author of a much admired "Essay on the Prophecies," and of several other works.

just

just as Mrs. Montagu and you do. I have begun to break the spell, and have been out two evenings running; there is one great joy in going out that I was not half so sensible of in my younger and gayer days as I am now—the joy of coming home again; how uncommon the blessing of having *such* a home to come to! However mortifying it is to come down from one's magnificence, both honesty and your concern for my finances oblige me to confess, that the *galanterie* of the standish was wholly my mother's, though she borrowed my hand to write the card.

I suppose you are very busy; you are a heroine at Sandleford *; no clouds can sadden, no storms discourage you from visiting all the Saxon shrines, and every romantic view to which relays of horses can convey you in the compass of a day. My farthest excursion has been to visit Lady Edgcumbe on Putney Heath, where she has a small house most delightfully situated, with a prospect, that, were it but an hundred miles off, would be worth going on purpose to see it. As *objects*, the noble populous city, the large prosperous villages, the wide extent of cultivated fields, are charming ones; but as to *familiar* objects, London, Putney, and

* The country seat of Mrs. Montagu, near Newbury in Berks, where Mrs. Carter then was on a visit.

Fulham,

Fulham, &c. convey petty and unpleasant ideas, by which the charm is lost. Pekin or Ispahan would strike me in a view much more, though much more uninteresting objects, because in Pekin, or Ispahan, I never visited any Chinese or Persian ladies, nor ever was impatient to get out of their environs into the genuine country.

Dr. Dumaresque breakfasted here the other morning, who, instead of being quietly settled in his country-living, is going, poor man, to embark again upon a stormy sea. This is both literally and allegorically true, and I am both glad and sorry for it. The Czarina has sent for him to come and assist her in the regulation of many new schools she is going to establish in various parts of her dominions. I wish heartily the Czarina was a better woman, but she certainly shews discernment in thus distinguishing a man, who has greatness of spirit, disinterestedness, and zeal for the promotion of learning and goodness, very suitable to such an undertaking; and it would have been a pity to bury such talents in a small country-cure, where however he lived as contentedly, and was as diligent in instructing and conversing with his rustic parishioners, as if he had never had any connection with courts and emperors. But now that he is called back to those busy scenes, he recollects that Poniatowski, so near the throne of Poland, is his particular friend.

Well,

Well, if some people——but no matter; I do not think but I may like to take a tour into Russia myself:—if one were at the worst banished into Siberia, there are in that country whole acres of roses, and every now and then one should stumble upon some hero in disgrace, and make a thousand pretty conversazioni, till some time or other Emin should by chance lead a victorious army that way, be overjoyed to meet with so many illustrious persons, and set each of us at the head of some conquered kingdom, making the good Dr. patriarch of the east. To be less romantic, did you never think there was a sort of resemblance in their characters? and in the Dr's, whom I really honour and admire, a naïveté, a blunt honesty, a nobleness and independence, that made him peculiarly fit to be, as he has been most truly and faithfully, the friend of Emin. I really hope where he is going he will do as much good as the nature of the people and the place will admit of: he does not propose staying more than a year.

Pray has Mrs. M. got one of Mr. Walpole's Memoirs of Lord Herbert*? So few copies are dispersed, that I know Lord Chesterfield was not able

* Life of Lord Herbert, of Cherbury, printed at Strawberry Hill in this year. Two hundred copies only were printed there.

to get one, and it is so amusing I wish you had it to wear away a rainy evening.

Aug. 18.

Just as I was going to step into the coach, who and what think you dropped from the clouds?—Mr. Erskine, with a long and most admirable Letter from Emin, dated at Tefflis* last March. The latter is perfectly alive, and completely himself. Heraclius has given him the bishopric of Achpat, a fine and plentiful territory, though at present in a ruinous state, very inaccessible to enemies, but as yet, for want of provisions and the wintry season, he had not taken possession of it. You shall have a copy when I can get one, the original goes to-morrow to Lord Northumberland, and I trust will rekindle every spark of ancient affection.

There is a most melancholy story from Russia of the murder of poor Ivan. On better thoughts I will not go into that country, where murderess would come upon my tongue, as cookmaid did upon Teague's whenever he said Mrs. Day. Wishing Mrs. M. and you sound sleep and cheerful days, I finish this volume.

* Tefflis is the capital of Georgia, of which Heraclius was the prince.

Miss

Miss TALBOT to Mrs. CARTER.

Lambeth, *Oct.* 1, 1764.

It is rumoured, dear Miss Carter, that you are to be in town this week. By *town*, I take it for granted, is meant *Lambeth*, however willingly I am at other times to fancy it the country. I am sorry for Mrs. Montagu, and only a *little* glad for ourselves, as I fear your stay will be but short. A few days you *must* give us, as my mother is now quite ready to receive you; till yesterday the house was quite full, though never *so* full but we could have found a comfortable *cell* for you; but now you shall have a grand apartment, and seven kittens to play with. I have at this minute the prettiest, whitest faced, good-humoured kitten in England sleeping by my fire-side; it composes me to look at a little innocent animal so void of all fears and anxieties; but as my small house will not maintain two cats, little puss is to be removed to a new service this week, on which occasion you will do well to furnish me with a little stoicism, for to *such* occasions I think it is well adapted.

I was at Lady Hardwick's at Richmond the other day, and must confess a fault; if it is one, it was really committed not rashly, but with mature deliberation.

beration. In conversation, the poem placed before Epictetus was mentioned with such very due applause, that I (on being questioned about the writer) intimated that I believed it to be Mrs. Chapone*, but that if it were, I knew she would dislike to have it known. This they treated as a very idle scruple, and seemed more inclined to think it was Mrs. H—d's, and were convinced of it by the M. H.; but they insisted I should write and ask you, because if it is a scandal to have writ a poem that would do credit to any one, it is quite incumbent on you to remove that scandal from Mrs. H., on whom it now lies, as to shield the person who really deserves it.

To-morrow, if the weather is fine, we mean to dine at Bray, stay all night at March's, and return on Thursday. I believe you would not feel more awkward or more alarmed at a journey over the Alps, than I do at this little excursion. If I were a heathen I should be apt to fancy I transmigrated out of an old tree, so mightily fond am I of the soil I grow on. But seriously, what can I do to overcome those unreasonably painful feelings, that cloud over the best half of my very happy life.

* In the last edition of Mrs. Carter's Epictetus, care is taken that Mrs. Chapone shall not be deprived of the credit due to her memory for that admirable poem.

" Cercando la cagion del cieco affanno
" Interrogo i pensieri, è non la sanno;
" Ne so fra pene oscure
" Dilletto indovinai che la consoli."

Every thing appears formidable—and why? But I may well be contented, enjoying (possessing at least) amid so many other essential blessings such perfect health and ease, as, I thank God, I do: I may well be contented, I say, with this only remains of my very long illness.

Let me tell you two anecdotes of two of my friends, which I learnt quite by accident, for they would be seriously hurt if they thought they were known. Lord Hardwick was exceedingly affected by the melancholy accident of a poor Mr. Lamb, who was killed at a fire in St. James's parish, leaving a wife with six children, and a seventh unborn. —Without any application, he sent her, through Mr. Seddon, 100*l.* Mrs. Smythe has a relation at Oxford, in indifferent circumstances, who has had a bilious fever: when she got better Mrs. S. called on her, and begged her to accept a small present, which was a purse of £00 guineas; only insisting it should never be mentioned to her again.

Miss TALBOT to Mrs. CARTER.

Lambeth, *Feb.* 22, 1765.

" La neve è a la Montagna
" L'inverno s'avvicina,
" O cara Carterina
" Che mai sara da mè !"

To be sure during the fury of this snow it is not possible, dear Miss Carter, to think of your coming to us, or our going to you; so we have nothing to trust to but the Penny-Post to satisfy you we are all well, and that I think by April —vezzoso Aprile—to get abroad again. Pray let me know (by penny) what sort of thing the Triumvirate is that is just come out; the puff about it gave me an idea it would be worth reading.

Be charitable, as a Correspondent, to your friends in the country, who are buried in snow, (that snow which is cherishing for you so rich a bloom of crocuses and almond blossoms), and let us have all the intelligence you can collect of all sorts, from the literati, the beau monde, the political, the poetical, and all the *cals*, down to the *nonsensical*. I have unfortunately missed of Dr. Mounsey,

Mounsey *, but found a note on my table to which he had no need to set his name. A person, whose character I was to enquire, had writ upon a paper, —Please to enquire at Mr. ———'s, who lives in Chancery Lane, and of Mrs. ———, who lives in ———. Under this I found, in his hand, "They are both dead, and I believe you are gone to the burial." He then added much the same as you told me about Emin, but could not leave the Letter, as he was going to carry it to Lord Northumberland. May he have good success! if that success will do no harm to the world, and do *real* good to Emin. But if I had at this minute ten thousand pounds to send him, it should be upon the sole condition of his carrying himself and all his Armenian mountaineer adherents, into Florida or Canada, to become there a free and flourishing colony, and war with soil and climate, and not with miserable human creatures. But perhaps if I knew the true state of Persia at this time, I might not be so scrupulous; for if it is entirely under the misrule of petty tyrants, the conquest of it by such a prince as Heraclius, (who should then leave the little nook of Georgia to Emin), would be but as cutting off an arm to save a life—an operation which though you nor I would perform, we would

* The physician, well known for his wit and eccentricities.

not dissuade. To help Emin out of immediate difficulties and real distresses is, I am sure, what one ought, if one could do it; for that he would make a wrong use of such assistance is by no means clear, and that his own character deserves assistance is indisputable. Still if adverse fortune should beat the little adamantine ball that it has played with so long back again hither, I do think some noble American scheme might (after all his other hopes are given up) be very practicable.

I did not mean when I sat down, to write you all these reveries, and have other things to do, so good night.

Miss TALBOT to Mrs. CARTER.

Lambeth, *May* 17, 1765.

My night was undisturbed by any alarm, but it gave an awkward feel to my waking recollection that you was no longer under the same roof. I see now it was a real kindness in you not to let me acquire any *long* habit of expecting to find you every day en famille. This day is so warm that I am particularly glad you are not stuffed up in a

snail-

snail-paced stage coach, with two tars, one smoaker, two fat gentlewomen (one of them sick with riding backwards), a little child, a lap dog, and half a dozen bundles. You see I am pretty well to-day. I have seen nobody yet but Mrs. Francis and Miss Carr. Mr. Kirby, who taught H. M. to draw, and now teaches Miss Bowes, is so good-natured, we need not have been afraid of him; he remembered young Carr, commended the drawings, said they were well worth four guineas; Mrs. Bowes very kindly gave five. How much good it does me now to have spent that afternoon at home! If every one of the sixty-six had turned to as good account, who would wish to racket about.

I can give you no very genuine account of yesterday's riots*; but Dr. Addington, who had been driving about Bloomsbury, saw the guards galloping down on a very formidable mob, some of whom flung stones at them. Somebody else had left a large body of them about poor Carr's, and my Lord Mayor going to read the proclamation to them. A vast mob that was on Thursday waiting for their Majesties in the Green Park, was dispersed by the force of oratory. A mean dressed man got

* These were the riots occasioned by the discontent of the Spitalfields weavers, in consequence of the importation of foreign silks.

up into a tree, and from thence harangued them very properly, and they quietly went away. This I had from an eye-witness, and it has such a Grecian air, I thought it would please you.

Miss TALBOT to Mrs. CARTER.

Lambeth, *June* 25, 1765.

I know not how my time has passed, dear Mrs. Carter, since I writ you last; one never does when it passes in a thousand *minuties*. When any body has read or writ a folio they have somewhat to show—but bills of fare, messages, Letters of mere business, are Sibyl's leaves dispersed by the breeze of every day. Again, when one walks so many miles straight forward along a Post road, the very mile-stones bear witness of one's diligence; but the thousand *allées et venues*, up and down, in and out, about this house, make no sort of figure in history. I have indeed lately opened my crayon-box, which has hardly been unclosed these twenty years, and attempted to take Miss Frost's picture.—It is not like her, but such as it is I look upon it as a wonderful performance, and if you would but come

up on purpose to give Miss Reade a few more settings this summer, I would accompany you and take so many lessons from her. Not but I know your's is in oil; and unfinished as it is, I think it an agreeable one, a little in the penserosa style, but mild, unaffected and sensible, and not like the common run of staring portraits*.

The cleverest thing I have done lately was hooking myself in to dine at Lord Hardwick's, with Lady Sophia and your friend Mons. de Rhoon. My old friend is not so handsome as he was in the year 1738, though he really looks very well; unfortunately we sat on opposite sides of the table, and he being a little deaf, and I talking very *small* (as I always do when I ought not), it did not do at all, and I lost the pleasant chat I expected.

La vita di Carlo Maggi is come safe to hand; but the book I am happiest in reading at present is a volume of Sermons of Abp. Leighton, strongly recommended to me by the Bishop of Man.

It was very good of you to inform us of so many particulars; you know the interest we take in all that concerns you and your's. We well know the provisions made for your brothers, sisters and

* This picture of Mrs. Carter was painted for Mrs. Montagu, and after her decease was kindly given to the Editor by her nephew Matthew Montagu, Esq.

 nephew,

nephew, does really (what mere personal wealth never did to any body) add to the happiness of your life. I do not wonder at your being affected as you are on the occasion, but may the concern soon wear off, and the comfort long remain. The equal share left to yourself pleases me more than if it had been a larger *.

There are great ministerial changes in agitation, but none yet settled; who will be in or out, if you wish to know, you must send for the conjurer to tell you; at least I know nobody less learned who can guess.

We dined yesterday at Fulham; it is astonishing to think what real improvements the magical wand of taste has made in the environs of the Bishop of London's Palace, as well as in the house itself. It is now absolutely in the country, all the brick wall annihilated. My mother complains that going to Fulham has made this place quite a town. It is a town of blooms and perfumes however. The fore-court, inhabited by full 200 very amusing chickens, is quite fragrant with lime blossoms. The eastern apartment at my mother's house, where I now reside, and from whence I am writing this, is sweeter than you can conceive with jessamines that cluster round the windows; the rose walk is to-day in its highest

* This alludes to the death of Mrs. Carter's uncle.

bloom.

bloom. At every spot one moves to in the garden is some variety of sweets; here a gale of spicy pinks, there the breath of lillies. Enter Dr. Mounsey, and he sends his compliments to you.

The Archbishop bids me tell you, you are very insolent on your riches, to talk what you will do with them before you have got them, but he will have you know that he means to keep it in his power to arrest you till you can actually tender him legal payment. Adieu.

Miss TALBOT to Mrs. CARTER.

Lambeth, *Sept.* 3, 1765.

I am still at Jessamin Hall, and the jessamines are still in very fine bloom. Michaelmas will warn me out as it does many other poor lodgers, who, alas, know not where they shall go next! How grateful then ought I to be, and I trust I am; for I have enjoyed this sweet place, and mean to be equally happy when I leave it. But how have I enjoyed it? Very much like a fine lady; and indeed what is a fine dressing-room for but to dress in? And accordingly I have bought a new gown, and

and been twice at St. James's. The caudle drinking has afforded a most agreeable and seasonable amusement to the whole town, high and low. The evening hours were, as I am told, a very pretty easy assembly. But my visits were in the morning, when Lady Egremont very obligingly carried me both times, and I am much delighted with her Majesty's whole family; and have made many good-humoured court acquaintance. Will not *you* take a trip to court this autumn to see your old acquaintance the hereditary Prince *?

This hot weather makes me languid, but I am afraid it is partly owing to that indolence † that has been growing upon me for so many years, and that on every recollection makes me out of humour with myself. In Stoic language, I feel myself to be a *wen*. I wish the good Stoics far enough for giving me such a disagreeable idea. Because I have little to do, I do nothing with spirit. If Dr.

* Of Brunswick; to whom Mrs. Carter had the honour of being known at Spa, and for whose person and character she had the highest respect.

† This indolence, of which Miss Talbot so often and so bitterly complains, was probably a distemper of the body rather than of the mind. It seems to have been occasioned by the beginning of that slow and painful malady, which after several years of severe, because concealed, sufferings, at last conducted her to the tomb.

Franklin would come over, and order me to clean the house with my own hands, I should be as happy as he made the Paris ladies by such sort of prescriptions. Or if I was obliged to spend a week in mere reading and meditation, (without so much as a kitten to interrupt me), I should, I believe, be in very good-humour with myself at the end of it. Or, if his Majesty would make me a Secretary of State. In short any thing (one excepted) that would take from me the appearance, without the reality, of being quite at my own liberty to do just what I please. I should sing like a gay French peasant, instead of growling like a free born English woman. I have just let you into the train of my thoughts; but do not let them make you uneasy, they vary for the better ten times a day. Adieu.

Miss TALBOT to Mrs. CARTER.

Lambeth, *Nov.* 1, 1765.

How little did I do you justice, dear Mrs. Carter; how little did I know you, when on seeing your Letter I imagined it would be full of reproaches; my conscience told me I deserved them.

My

My life flows on in the same swift pleasant stream that it has done, I thank God, for so many years past. I know all the while that long before it conveys me into the wide and awful ocean, I must probably be stranded for a while on a bleak desart shore, and wish often for a pause to consider what provisions may timely be laid in to support those desolate hours. You see by this I propose living to old age, and look upon myself at present as in the gay and flowery season of life; and the truth is, I have so little at present to remind me of being a day older than I was twenty years ago, that a little leisure to help my recollection would be vastly good for me; but indeed I have none: day after day passes very pleasantly, but I fear unprofitably, with such an eternal variety of objects as is, I believe, very good for one's health and spirits, but tends grievously to unfit one for a quieter kind of life.

I have just hit upon a method by which the writing frequently to half a dozen friends, which has of late years been a heavy task to me, will become a daily and inexhaustible fund of amusement. I have been trying the experiment for Mrs. Smythe, who left us about a week ago, and see it will answer very well, so you may expect me from henceforward to be a very good Correspondent.

My

My chief reason for writing to-day is to put you in mind that you have been engaged these *two* years to spend some time at Lambeth in your way to London; last winter, naughty Miss, you forgot it. Do not fear that I shall carry you into Trophonius's cave. My system is not so gloomy as you imagine.—But that we will talk or write over hereafter; and also of Emin: I have had a Letter from him, dated beyond Mount Caucasus. Lady Stanhope is at Geneva. Here is Mr. Teg's with a bill of fare, so adieu.

Mrs. CARTER to Miss TALBOT.

Deal, *Nov.* 15, 1765.

You make me very happy by the account you give me of yourself, dear Miss Talbot. May God long continue your present situation!—But do not, I beseech you, regret your time passing too agreeably to afford you the leisure of anticipating any change. There never was, perhaps, in the world, a single instance, that any event was the better supported for being much considered before it arrived. This kind of preparation is a very favourite

favourite stoic doctrine, but surely is a very wrong one, and its natural effect is to frustrate the present enjoyment of every blessing, and weaken too that sense of gratitude to the divine goodness in prosperity, which best disposes the mind for submission in adversity. Wherever there is a fixt resolution of conformity to the will of God in general, there never will be wanting a due support in every particular trial.

I quite envy you a Correspondent who can date from the cliffs of Mount Caucasus. But pray how does Emin do, and what is he about? I wish Mr. Teg's bill of fare and his fish had been swimming in the sea when they interrupted your giving me an account of your foreign dispatches: had it not been for him, perhaps, you might have told me that Emin had freed the Armenians, that Dr. Dumaresque had set the Russians on their hind legs, and that Lady Stanhope had converted Voltaire.

I congratulate you on having discovered a method to render Letter writing a daily and inexhaustible amusement. When you have quite perfected it, I hope you will impart so useful a secret to your indolent friends, upon condition, however, that it does not consist in writing a journal: for though it would add to the charms of your Letters, it could be no assistance to mine. For what Journal could I transmit to any body from hence, but a table of tides,

tides, or a register of the weather, which forms the greatest diversity of my life in this place.—And how thankful ought one to be for days not marked by calamity, nor blackened by the horrors of guilt.

I am extremely obliged to you for reminding me of my engagement to Lambeth, which however I had not the least intention to forget. I hope to be so happy as to wait on you pretty early in January.

Miss TALBOT to Mrs. CARTER.

PERPETUAL LETTER 1st.

Nov. 20, 1765.

My device is neither more nor less than this, instead of a Letter to send you somewhat like a Dodsley's Memorandum Book, to write a sentence every day, such as the day affords, more than one if time and inclination serves. This precludes all excuses, (the most tiresome part of a Letter to the reader, and much the most formidable to a conscientious writer) for there will be always somewhat ready

ready to send. Then it *saves* time instead of *wasting* it, as all formal Letter writing does, for it will most agreeably fill those bits and ends of time which one too often whiles away, and when the only thing one is fit for is to throw a sentence of sense or nonsense, as it happens, at a friend. Being weary to night, having jumbled all the way to St. Paul's, I shall use my own permission and leave off.

Nov. 22.

Indeed I had no time yesterday to write *even* a sentence.—The Berkleys were with us from Acton, staid till one, and then Lady Grey till dinner time, and the evening was taken up entirely by Letters of business absolutely necessary.—Well, in this way time goes—time is gone—and eternity will be present in a moment! It is not, my dear Mrs. Carter, that I want leisure to think over all melancholy possibilities—this would be a very wrong scheme, if I could pursue it.—No, I want leisure to acquire those dispositions, to form those tempers, to ensure those aids which alone can make every change of this world not only supportable but happy, and in the meanwhile fit one better for supporting one's part in society. I want time to study my faults and correct them; to think over the blessings I enjoy, and have enjoyed, and be duly

thankful

thankful for them; to build chearful hopes of the future, on grateful experience of the past. Want to sit alone and be gloomy!—No, not I indeed.

I am very well contented too that all my time that is necessarily taken up, *should* be so, and always endeavour to enjoy it chearfully while it passes; but a life of *much* dissipation is too liable to bring on a habit of *constant* dissipation; and I find idleness and trifling grow upon me. This evening I am so tired, that if this were a Letter to be begun and concluded, I should in despair take up some silly book. But this sort of thing is a device to catch myself in, the trap of my own idleness. Why did I not devise it long ago!

Nov. 22.

To-day I have done nothing but attend to my mother, because she has had an awkward giddiness, from which, thank God, Mr. Hawkins has quite relieved her.

Nov. 25.

How can I be thankful enough for the blessing of health continued to us all! Every little alarm, when happily over, makes one feel this thankfulness more sensibly. I have lived in a great deal of company these two days. However I find time to read a little. Abp. Leighton's works are great favourites with me at present. There is, I think, the

the best exposition of the Lord's Prayer I ever read; were I to educate a child, instead of teaching it prayers by rote, I would, as soon as it was old enough to comprehend any thing, read to it with proper familiarisations the most striking parts of this exposition, till it had learnt that one prayer word by word, with full sense of the meaning of every one.

Nov. 26.

Well now, with all your objections to a Journal, dear Mrs. Carter, can you have any to writing down every day to a friend the thoughts and speculations that are uppermost in your mind, and of consequence the most easily writ down? And can one not say such things by the sea-side as well as in the midst of a court: the Journal that consists merely of facts, must have facts of great consequence to support it with tolerable spirit; but in the quietest and obscurest life, one can read, write, think, and feel: and the whole wide creation is open to our observations. I have been sick all day with envy of Mrs. Govers, because she saw the finest red sun rise that ever was seen, while I like a log lay fast asleep.

Nov. 27.

If I would make the paquet really interesting I ought to gratify your friendly curiosity about Emin, but as the latest I know of him (though I received

the Letter at the end of August) is above a twelvemonth old, all I certainly know is very unsatisfactory, and I am forced to please myself with conjectures. After entertaining him kindly for thirteen months, and holding him in very high esteem, Heraclius had seized his books and papers, confined him thirty days to his room, and then under a strong guard sent him three days journey over Mount Caucasus to a Tartar village, where he had been sick four months, and in want of every thing. I should not write this so tranquilly if I did not know from Lazarow that he has since received the remittance so very long due, and talked of proceeding into the greater Armenia.

His father, at Calcutta, had heard last January of many brave actions performed by him, but whether before or after this banishment from Teflis is not clear. I think it must have been before, and that his great successes had excited envy and jealousy; for he says to me he dares not mention the cause of that noble prince treating him so ill, least it should look like boasting of himself, but I may probably hear it from other hands. Accordingly I see frequent mention in the papers of a Georgian *rebellion*, which seems to go on and be nobly successful, for a rebellion it is not, but a struggle to regain lost liberty from the merciless Turks. I long to hear again—and yet I long much more

more that he should hear from hence somewhat more to his purpose than Letters of good advice. But Lord Northumberland has drunk deep, I am afraid, of the waters of Lethe. Could I collect enough of the waters of Pactolus I should not much care. Observe—I do not want him to beat the Turks, *as Turks*, (*that* poor wretches is wholly their own business) but as merciless usurpers and oppressors. And to be sure I should mix a twig of laurel in my aigrette, if my friend, correspondent, and éléve, should prove the victorious hero of the east.

Mrs. Montagu is for setting all right by the waters of Helicon, and wants somebody to raise a subsidy by publishing his Memoirs, but I doubt this would be hardly safe as yet.

Because you do not like a Journal I shall say the rest of my say straight forward. Thank you for remembering your engagement, fulfil it as soon as you can in January. To see you now and then (provided it does not over fatigue you) is very enlivening: but to have you for a while first, evenings and all, is comfortable to think of: and God be thanked that we have the prospect once again as cheerfully as ever—when one parts for the summer one dares not look so far forward.

What an agreeable fellow was that Philip of Macedon! we are reading his history*; but the

* Dr. Leland's Life of Philip was published in 1758.

wise

wise and elegant Athenians put me out of all patience, they are so like moderns: and all the Greeks of that time, some three or four excepted, appear such arrant scoundrels, that Philip, who was a clever scoundrel and made fools of them all, appears to great advantage. On Thursday we called at a fine new print-shop in Conduit Street, where Madame Pompadour's cabinet is very soon to be shewn; the present collection is very beautiful. Lord Dartmouth dined with us, he is indefatigable in his business (the Board of Trade), and more amiable than ever. What an agreeable pair of Lords will be at the Board when Lord Palmerston comes in there, which he will soon do, as Mr. J. Yorke is moving to the Board of Admiralty. Lord Dartmouth enquired very much after you, and seems to preserve a strong remembrance of the evening he met you at Lady Frances's *. I have been to-day at Lady Grey's, and *chemin faisant* called at the Asylum, where they have nearly compleated their number, 100 girls. I saw about threescore sitting variously employed in their school-room, looking neat, modest, healthy, and happy.

I am infinitely obliged to Mrs. Margaret Hunter, (who seems a very good woman, pray tell me somewhat further about *her*), for giving me so

* Lady Frances Coningsby.

good an uncle. Can I even rally on this subject without lifting up my heart in serious thankfulness to that Providence which raised up for me, without any degree of relationship, such a parent*; and has continued such a blessing from the dawn to the evening of life;—yes, the *evening*†, for it is certainly late in the afternoon, with me at least, though the sun shines brighter than it did early in my day.

Every body well at home, the bells ringing merrily, my cat asleep comfortable on a chair by the blaze of a cheerful fire, myself amidst books and papers fully employed—Pray what rout room can afford a pleasanter evening to your friend C. T.

* Meaning the Archbishop, with whom she and her mother had resided from the time she was five years old. She never knew her father, for she was not born till he had been dead five months.

† Miss Talbot was born in 1721, so that she was now only in her forty-fifth year, but her health had never been good.

Mrs. CARTER to Miss TALBOT.

Deal, *Dec.* 20, 1765.

Your device, my dear Miss Talbot, is an admirable good one, and I shall profit by your sentences, though you will be very little edified by mine. Not but even mine may be as good as most of those which I have yawned over in Plutarch; and which, except the respectable circumstance of being written in Greek and put into a book, are often inferior to what you hear uttered in good blundering English from honest Mrs. Govers every day. Perhaps it is not judging fairly of these treasures of ancient wisdom, from the little information we receive from them at present. When time was young, and before the experience of successive ages had, on most common subjects, rendered the ignorant and the learned equally wise; these apophthegms, founded on the attentive observations of philosophic leisure, might be useful maxims of moral prudence to such as wanted opportunity of making them for themselves. Having, I hope, fully proved to you that I am as wise as Thales or Solon, I will leave you for the present to get myself dressed.

Transfer your envy from Mrs. Govers to me, who not content to catch the rising sun from a chamber window, rambled this morning by moonlight to the top of a hill, from whence I saw the first opening of the morning, and at my return saw the whole creation gradually wakening into life and beauty by the illumination of the advancing day. I felt, I hope with a due degree of thankfulness, the blessing of being in health and motion, and capable of enjoying the scene around me, while so many were tossing on a bed of pain, or crippled by debility, and so many harassed by distressing cares. My walking, my dear Miss Talbot, is a happiness, but your sleeping is a virtue; and so pray contrive to sleep on for the good of your friends, and leave speculations on the morning to Mrs. Govers and me.

I congratulate you on your prospect of succeeding in your kind endeavours for Emin. How happy it was that your former remittance reached him at a time when it must be so particularly useful for his relief in such a distressful situation.

I have been vast busy in contriving a dinner for about a dozen people, which is always a very serious consideration with me, who have no very extraordinary natural talents for it.—Most folks consider first, I suppose, how their dinner will eat; but my first and last thought is, how it will look.—And so comfort-

comforting myself with the hope, that in defect of the "*pye* the good company will be content to gnaw the *streamer*," I sit down to the contemplation of my picture with great satisfaction.

Mrs. Hunter is sister to poor Smart the poet, and wife to a surgeon at Margate, and an excellent wife and mother I am told she is, as well as a good woman in all other respects. I congratulate you on dining with Lord Dartmouth, and myself on the honour he did me by enquiring after me. According to my present scheme I hope to be at Canterbury on Saturday the 4th of January. And if it please God that I travel prosperously I shall hope to have the happiness of seeing you early on Monday evening.

Miss TALBOT to Mrs. CARTER.

Lambeth, *June* 12, 1766.

By this time, just nine, I may hope the kind companion of our *solitary* three weeks is safe arrived at that home, from which friendship alone could tempt her to stay so long. I did wake this morning at four, saw the day-light, and had more than

than half a mind to slip on my long gown and go down into the little parlour at five; and had ——— you shall have a Letter of breaks and interruptions just as they happen. Yesterday passed as it could. One good thing here is, one has no leisure to lay any sorrow much to heart. *Our dissipation* continues not a moment to oneself. Rejoice that you are got back to your rocks, and that you can

"Silent wander by the sounding main."

We are going to-day to dine at Fulham, good Doctor and Mrs. Hunt from Oxford, Messrs. Carson and Devayne and a friseur (and please you) have taken up the whole morning: thus the day goes. Pray entreat Mrs. Montagu, in the *retirement* of her coal-pit, to think that she has Correspondents who wish to know if she has lost the pain in her face, and the noise of the hammers. I have been reading your third volume of Peruvians with pleasure, and though the objection you made is just, it does not hurt me in these as in the Tales of the Genii. The Peruvian seems a patriarchal religion before it grew corrupted, but Christian piety with Mahometan doctrines, is "a jewel of gold in a swine's snout."

Well,

Well, our day at Fulham was very pleasant, I wished for you to see the prospect from the bishop's new library, where we sat. One window shaded by the branches of a venerable cedar—A large bow looking over a fine lawn, interspersed with clumps of trees and shrubs to the river, and Putney church beyond it. To-day we were twelve at table, among the rest Dr. Jortin*, who enquired very kindly after Miss Epictetus.

Mrs. CARTER to Miss TALBOT.

Deal, *June* 28, 1766.

I REJOICE, my dear Miss Talbot, you are all so well; I like your scrap Letter very much, and beg you will continue it by all means.

Why did not we read and talk over Mrs. Williams's fairy tale together? From the same train of life that I could never get at you to talk over any thing. To compare small things with great, my

* This eminent scholar and good man, was then chaplain to the Bp. of London (Dr. Osbaldiston), and had considerable church preferment from him.—He died in his vicarage house at Kensington in 1770.

situation at Lambeth, with regard to you, very much resembles what I once experienced with regard to an organ placed at the end of a court in London, into which the room I then inhabited had a window. I could just perceive enough of the sound to make me teaze myself to death by perpetual fruitless efforts to hear the music, which the impediment of the objects between us would never suffer me to do. To return to Mrs. Williams's tale, it is surely very beautiful, and yet there is something in the conclusion so unsatisfactory and melancholy, that it left only a gloomy impression on my mind.

Your distinction would be perfectly just, if the Christian sentiments in the Peruvian Stories were represented as patriarchal religion. But they are to be considered there, as the result of what is called natural religion; and the infidels would most heartily thank any author, who allows to *that* a system of worship and morals, such as is not to be found in any history of the people upon the face of the earth, before Christianity. The Peruvians, indeed, were preferable to many other nations. But the reformation of their Incas extended no farther than reclaiming them from brutal manners, the dreadful abomination of human sacrifices, to a milder kind of idolatry. Their immediate object of worship was the sun; and I think

think I have read in Garcilasso de la Vega, that they thought it impious to address the Creator of the universe any otherwise than by ascending to the top of a hill and raising their eyes to heaven.—One would imagine by all this, that I had taken you at your word, and supposed you to know no more of history than you profess to do.

Whether Mrs. Montagu may not be delighting herself with a tour through the coal mines, and have lost all remembrance of her sub-celestial friends is more than I know, for I have not heard from her since I came home.

Miss TALBOT to Mrs. CARTER.

Lambeth, *Aug.* 23, 1766.

I must write to you at my coucher, dear Miss Carter, or never write at all. I thought to have had a quiet evening, when it was all bewitched away in counting money, and I was forced to think all the civil things I could about money to keep myself in tolerable temper with my employment.

I shall

I shall fancy if I write thus Journal-wise, by bits and scraps, that I am Dean Swift, and you Stella and Mrs. Dingley, for we are reading those three new volumes, in which he writes to them in that style. Happily I have no Lord Treasurer nor Secretary St. John to write about. I love him in those Letters very well, by *him* I mean Swift. I have read Zaide, which I do not admire, as it is calculated to undo all the good impressions that may have been made by the Marquis de Rozelle.

What a dreary day of rain!—Yet it is only by reflection for other people that I feel it any grievance, as even such weather gives no dreariness to this cheerful house. If you were here at this minute, I think (and it is the first time since you went) we might chat quietly and comfortably for an hour.—But, alas, you would have the head-ache or the rheumatism, for I fear in this weather you are prosecuted by them both. Mrs. Montagu is in the best place just now, her fires are ready laid. This wet I am afraid will bring on a still greater scarcity than we have yet felt. It cannot bring on any evil that we do not in manifold ways deserve.

A fine summer day again, and a busy day; called in the morning to a gentleman who could not speak a word of English. Took it for granted it must be Lazarow, with dispatches from Trebisond;

bisond; opened his Letter in some hurry; found it a very civil one from Mrs. Honeywood. Went to town. Lady Grey looking chearful. Dr. Ford gone out, but not yet well; under Dr. Addington's care. Mrs. Scott very agreeable, the room neither hot nor perfumed, though there were both fire and flower-pots. Sent to Mrs. Dunbar's, very well, just returned from Bath, goes out of town Saturday. Mrs. Ryder and Miss Terrick working very exemplarily.—Mrs. R. expects hourly to go to her bed. Mr. Comyn at dinner. A charming long walk till eight o'clock. Then Mr. Devayne, to tell us he had succeeded for a poor man; he has a noble friendly zeal, and does things speedily, heartily, and to the purpose; he and Dr. Stinton * supped with us. Adieu, it is past eleven, and you may judge how tired I am; you are once for all to take it for granted every soul enquires most kindly for you, and sends messages.

Have you called on Lady Holdernesse, and how do you like her? I find writing literally Journals would take up too great a portion of one's life, unless one did like Dr. Mounsey, and ordered *that* one Letter to be circulated through all one's friends,

* One of the archbishop's chaplains, and afterwards rector of Wrotham. To him, and the present bishop of London, his Grace left the revisal of his manuscripts, &c.

whether

whether acquainted with each other or not. Nobody could do this but Dr. Mounsey, but in *him* it is very right and rational, and gives one a vast deal of entertainment. The rain has driven him from Malvern, but being, as he says, mountain mad, he is now at Bristol hot wells. I have at last visited his favourite Mrs. Gataker, and like her very much.

You cannot imagine what a kind of delight it is to me to find Swift, in his private life, a really good and amiable man. It seems an anticipation of that knowledge of character in their true and good light, which will surely make a part of future happiness. One used to think *him* a mere wild beast of a wit, and it was the diligent employment of his flourishing years to do good and kind offices.

His Grace is getting stout again; he preached to us twice on Sunday; this is cause of great thankfulness, and yet I am full of grievances to-day, and could you knock at my door, glad as I should really be to see you, I should receive you with a cloudy countenance. National affairs go——— not at all to my liking; domestic affairs perplex me. Most of the changes you will have seen in the papers, but will doubt their authority till confirmed in written hand. Out—Lord Rockingham, D. of New., D. of Rich., Ld. Winch., Ld. Chanc, *In*—D. of Grafton, Mr. Pitt, Ld. Shelburne, Ld. North-

Northington, Ld. Camden. You will honour Ld. Temple for having broke off principally on account of Lord Lyttelton.

I have just been reading a book, lately published, which I entreat you to like, as I do, exceedingly.—It is in two volumes, Sermons to Young Women. *You* are in, and handsomely in, but not *so* handsomely as you would have been, had the author known you better.

Mrs. CARTER to Miss TALBOT.

Deal, *Aug.* 28, 1766.

What a poor humdrum mortal do I appear to myself, dear Miss Talbot, when I compare my unvaried *train de vie* with the account of your sprightly doings. I rejoice in them, however, and think they must do you good, though I selfishly used to fret and vex at finding you belonged to *tout le monde*, when I was longing for half an hour *en particulier*. It did me a world of good to find you so kindly wished me to partake that single jewel of an hour which you picked out of the crowd since I left you.

I fear

I fear your apprehensions about the weather must have greatly encreased; for bad as it has been for some time, yesterday was beyond all the rest—yet one has too often known very unpromising appearances end in a plentiful season, not to hope that it may be again the case. It is too true, that we but little deserve the continuance of the blessings for which we have made so ungrateful a return. Yet, if ten righteous persons could once have saved a devoted people, may we not hope that a proportionable greater number may avert the divine vengeance from this nation, foolish and wicked as, alas, we too generally are.

I am glad you have called on Mrs. Scot, it has, I am sure, rejoiced her heart, and she deserves it. What upon earth could Mrs. Honeywood write to you about. I have never read Swift's last published Letters, but am glad to find they will help to justify me, in always having had a more favourable idea of his character than most people seemed to think he deserved. There always appeared a rectitude and sincerity in him, much superior to the greater number of his contemporary geniuses.—His wit, I cannot help thinking, was mere distemper, and for many instances of shocking impropriety and levity into which it hurried him, he was perhaps as little accountable as for the delirium of a fever. Lord Corke, I think,

some-

somewhere speaks of his deplorable idiotcy as a judgment: surely it would have been more charitable to have considered it, as the last stage of a long madness, which very frequently terminates in this conclusion.

A countess is too considerable an object in a state of rustication for me to omit answering your questions about Lady Holdernesse. I have had the honour of dining with her once, and am sure you would like her; she seems to have great good sense, without any affectation or parade, and a fine open countenance. I was delighted with my day*. Have you read the Adventures of Alphonso and the rest of that collection, and how do you like them?

Miss TALBOT to Mrs. CARTER.

Lambeth, *Sept.* 8, 1766.

I will put down my date honestly, that you may neither think me better nor worse than I am. Little puss is sitting by me on a huge

* The friendship then begun continued without interruption to the death of that most amiable and excellent lady.

folio

folio of popish saints, on which I have wasted many a half hour lately.—It is a translation of Ribadeneira, lent me by Dr. Hawkesworth, whom I like mightily, and his wife likewise.

Sept. 24.

Not one minute have I had since I began this to add a line. Yesterday we all drank coffee at Croydon, as we have frequently this summer, and walked about the gardens.

Poor dear Mrs. Mackenzie is come up to try her friends interest, that he may at least have his guardship continued him; his time expires at Christmas. Alas, the Duke of Queensbury is in Scotland, and Mr. Oswald in Ireland, and who will interset themselves for those who have only merit and distress?—you would, I am sure, if you had any interest. I wish any friend of your's was a dear friend of Sir C. Saunders.—I do grieve for them at my heart, and for poor Dr. ——, though I never saw him; you must feel how much it struck me. Not that one is to judge by events; so do not imagine that I am tempted by any unreasonable refinement; but there is a Scripture expression of which I never before felt the full force, " That ye may be harmless and blameless:" it is right to endeavour to be useful, but this aim should be regulated in poor human creatures

tures by a still stronger endeavour never to be hurtful, and glad and thankful we may be when we attain even that.

Pray ask Mrs. Montagu if she hears any thing in Newcastleshire of the charming Mrs. Wilson of 104, who has taken a trip from New York to visit her grandchildren there. I fell in love with her in yesterday's paper, and want to know if it is true.

Sept. 26.

How can you be so extravagant in these times as to idle away your money in such a superfluity as a fine fancied mahogany case to figure in at the Museum? Is it for the murders committed by your disdainful eyes and adamantine heart, or by your satirical pen, that you have condemned yourself to be dissected? If you do not read newspapers you will think my head turned, but if you do, the article I mean will have caught your attention as it did ours. It must be you or Mrs. Mac—ley.

Oct. 4.

Here is my Letter yet, and now it has waited for great events. Since it was begun we have a Princess Royal, a Queen of Denmark, a Duke of Cumberland, a Duke and Duchess of Northum-

berland, a second Miss Michael, born over my head at three this morning*.—These topics would lead me far, especially the poor Queen of Denmark, gone out alone into the wide world. not a creature she knows to attend her any further than Altona. It is worse than dying—for die she must to all she has ever seen or known—but then it is only dying out of one bad world into another, just like it, and where she is to have cares and fears and dangers and sorrows that will yet all be new to her. May it please God to protect and instruct and comfort her, poor child as she is! and make her as good, as beloved, and as happy as I believe her aunt Louisa was! They have been just telling me how bitterly she cried in the coach as far as any body saw her.

I rejoice that you have got for a neighbour a countess you so much admire, and that your acquaintance begun so agreeably. What could Mrs. Honeywood write to me about? A poor Frenchman in distress, who by the Abp's. interest with Mr. Devayne obtained what he desired, and, I believe, deserved. I have long ago finished the third volume of Swift, and can, I think, collect from it, (what

* The public topics are sufficiently known; *Miss Michael* was probably the daughter to some domestic of the Archbishop.

I confess

I confess I respect him the more for) that his spleen and wretchedness proceeded from being like Sir Charles Grandison, deeply in love with two amiable women at the same time. Not indeed that the violence of poor Vanessa's Letters gives one any very amiable idea of *her*, but yet I can heartily pity and excuse him, and indeed there seem to me a thousand things in his character great and good. Lord B——st's Letters are by far the worst in the pack, and how Dr. Hawkesworth could say there was nothing in *them* to disparage any character I cannot guess, for they are below contempt.

Mrs. CARTER to Miss TALBOT.

Deal, *Oct.* 11, 1766.

Fye upon you and your popish saints, my dear Miss Talbot, who hold it a meritorious action to renounce and forget your friends. Your whole folio is not half so well worth reading as Lloyd's Chronicle, which has often given me the comfort of seeing the archbishop's name, and inferring because he was very busy he must be very well; a point which I am heretic enough to deem

of more consequence to the world than any thing contained in your legendary collection

> Of saints that never yet had being,
> Or being, ne'er were saints.

I was breaking my heart for the Q. of Denmark when I received your Letter, yet her youth, though it may render the first shock of parting more violent, will make it wear off the sooner, and she will the more easily accommodate herself to the new world into which she is entering. It may, indeed, be as bad a one in general as that she has left; yet by what I have heard of it, that particular part of it in which she will be most immediately conversant, has many advantages for a person of her inexperience. I am heartily grieved for the poor Mackenzies, and from my heart wish I had the power, as I have the will, to serve them.

If in your winter provision of writing tools you should chance to forget wax and wafers, do pray sew your next Letter with a needle and thread: for I am too covetous of a Letter of your's not to wish to have it en propre. I thought myself, however, very lucky that nobody defrauded me of any part of the last: which, considering that all the world must have read it, is an instance of more honesty

than from half the world might reasonably have been expected.

I am afraid I am more riotous than you. Destroying and burning, indeed, deserve little toleration: but to prevent starving, by reducing provisions to a reasonable price, I cannot help thinking rather more than half pardonable, while no legal means were taken to alleviate the general distress. I will certainly enquire about Mrs. Wilson.

Miss TALBOT to Mrs. CARTER.

Lambeth, *Dec.* 8, 1766.

I could find in my heart to seal this Letter up before I begin it, for fear I should ever again be guilty of such a careless trick. I believe, however, an immoderately long Letter in a woman's hand may go as safe open as sealed or sewed. Do not you remember Emin's telling how one of my long Letters saved him a ring that was sent him by Lord Northumberland. He was attacked by some eastern robbers, and my Letter happening to be the first, they opened it, the sight of so much writing discouraged them, and they gave him all back together,

gether, the ring being in one which they had not opened.

Somebody of Lambeth was lately at Deal, and heard that you was coming to town to be a maid of honour. I wish you joy—somebody else saw you there very laudably employed. I wish it had been successfully, for even then the melancholy scene would have affected your spirits full enough. Do comfort me by saying there was no sort of harm in that last pacquet about which I was so abominably careless.

Dec. 18.

Indeed you are cross for not contriving to come to us in your way to town, I never thought of inviting you, or rather indeed thought it had been a general agreement for every year. Your headaches, and your want of sitting alone might be a rational excuse in most places, where people are so sociable as to love to be together all day long; but that people here can sit as unmolested by their fire sides as at any home in the world, Dr. and Mrs. Potter can bear witness—they are still here, but by your own unwillingness to come, you may guess at their impatience to get away, and they do hope to get away by Monday, if not this week. Well, upon any terms, I am glad you are coming into

into this part of the world, and that we shall, at least, see you sometimes: indeed, I know your goodness, we shall see you often, and you know my cares, you will not one time in ten see me with an unclouded brow. I thank God, at present, it is less cloudy than it was, but his will be done. The Abp. is mending every day. Let me hear from you again if you can; if I have not time to write again, accept my best wishes for your journey, the weather is charming, and may it continue so.

Miss TALBOT to Mrs. CARTER.

Jan. 1, 1767.

Accept, dear Mrs. Carter, the best wishes of this new year, and of very many to come. I think, with great joy, of seeing you here on the 7th. I hope I did not huff you into coming, and that it will not, on the whole, be very disagreeable to you, and then indeed it will be very comfortable to us. I imagine you would have us send the coach as usual to the Inn at this end of Bridge Street, but not being quite sure of the

hour,

hour, shall be glad of one line to inform me. Adieu.

Miss TALBOT to Mrs. CARTER.

Lambeth, *July* 9, 1767.

Lest you should be uneasy, dear Mrs. Carter, at not hearing from hence, I sit down by owl light to bid you welcome to that home you have so long been pining for. I have wasted my evening pleasantly enough in watching from my mother's windows the family syllabub and dance under the trees in the garden. By this you will guess we are all well.

Why do not I tell you how I like the Count? because I was too much taken up with him to find leisure; I have been as full of shallow contrivances as if I had been going to be married myself. Yesterday evening they were married by his Grace, in the long gallery, he having too much gout to go as far as the chapel. My old friend Lord Percy gave away the amiable Lady Egremont, to the agreeable Count de Bruhl. The only assistants her two daughters, my mother, and your most obedient.

They

They stayed with us till nine; but thank God the Abp. is rather the better than the worse for it: nay we tell him he must contrive to marry some pretty couple once a week.

July 20.

Fye upon me, I do not get on at all, and now my news is not worth the reading, but you will have had it from Mrs. Montagu, who with Mrs. Scott spent the next evening with us, and a most delightful evening we had.

We are deep (for our after supper book) in Lord Lyttelton*. For my own amusement I am glad he digresses so much; but does he not digress too much for a biographer? I am much entertained with the History of the Crusades, though indeed it is terrible. If you ever meet with the History of Nourjahad it will interest and amuse you. It would be useful to be read by all the young members at the club at Arthur's; the only shocking part is when he grows what the author meant for very pious, and aspires after the beatific vision of that rascal Mahomet.

I have had also great pleasure this week in seeing your new prebendary of Canterbury, Mr. Benson. When he is in spirits he often puts me in

* Hist. of Henry II.

mind

mind of his ever dear uncle *, and to see him so happy as the Abp. has just now made him was quite joyous.

Miss TALBOT to Mrs. CARTER.

Lambeth, *Oct.* 10, 1767.

It is, my dear Mrs. Carter, a scandalous thing that I write to you so seldom. But what can I do? I write every Post to Wrest, as Lady Grey is there with only her daughters, my Lord being gone to Knaresborough to drink Harrowgate waters. I go out twice a day, and every day somebody or other drops in, and twenty times a day I am weary and good for nothing. The poor Dean of Christ Church is in a dangerous way. I have oftener gone lately to Mrs. Friend and Miss Gregory than to any body else. Though I truly love and value many of the people that are still in town, I could be heartily glad to have no call to London for a month or two; else it spreads such a tameness through the year. But indeed it is very agreeable going to Mrs. Friend; her dispositions are so sweet, she takes every thing

* The Bp. of Gloucester.

so rightly. I am very angry with a young friend of mine whom you and I know, and I think more then I say, because when a step is irretrievably taken one would not have it viewed in the severest light: but pretty and agreeable though she be, and I dare say with many good qualities, I can never compliment her, as other people do, with the fashionable phrase of a good heart, for what is the heart that could in such a situation aggravate the heavy distresses of an amiable tender widowed mother, by robbing her of her dearest companion, and filling her with additional anxieties for the welfare of a wilful child! By very great good luck she has met with a man, as every body says, of uncommon merit and accomplishments, but could she not, at least, have ventured to wait for him one year, till she had been perhaps less wanted at home, and the prospects before her and her lover fairer and less uncertain? Yet perhaps had I been of just her age, and in just her situation, mere want of courage and resolution might have been all the difference between us. If there was not a great deal of good in her, blind passion would not have been so providentially directed to a right choice. She perplexes me sadly at present, for if I hear her talked of in a circle where there are both mothers and daughters, I find myself equally disposed to excuse her to the parents, and abuse her to

the children. Whether right or wrong in other respects, she has certainly set a dangerous example*.

Pray, pray, get on as fast as you can with your Arabic, that you may be fit to translate for us forty-four Assemblies, or ingenious conversations, by Hariri, the son of Himam; there are fifty in all, six just translated by a gentleman of Cambridge, and we are undone to know whether the whole fifty can possibly be equally dull and unedifying. Did your ever read Noah? it seems to me even in the translation delightfully fine.

Miss TALBOT to Mrs. CARTER.

Lambeth, *Nov.* 15, 1767.

Many thanks, dear Mrs. Carter, for the sincere pleasure you have given us all three, by your communication of two such excellent Letters †. I return

* This match proved a very unhappy one, and the husband and wife have for many years been separated; but as they are both living and have a family, it was not thought right to mention their names, though the reflections upon this clandestine marriage were too valuable to be suppressed.

† These Letters were printed in Mrs. Carter's Memoirs. They related to the annuity so handsomely granted her by Mr.

I return them to you, but must confess I have taken a copy, which is safe locked up in my desk, never to be shewn to any mortal without your permission; we have not mentioned it to any soul, nor shall we till we have your leave, so pray send a permit for speaking soon. Every thing is such an honour to both sides, that it would be faulty to be silent. Do not think that I am delighted at your having the disposal of a little more paltry money, for I know no definite sum that is worthy of your spirit; but my joy and your's too, is that the possessors of such a noble fortune set out on its enjoyment with a spirit so every way right, and that shews, I think, it is likely to be a blessing to themselves, by their making it, as far as wealth can be, one to others.

I shall know how to pity your rheumatism, and admire your patience better than ever I did in my life. However, I have been tolerably free these three days. The Abp. has had a most kindly fit of the gout in his left hand, which went gradually off, and permitted him to preach in our new chapel at Stockwell on Sunday, and to attend her Majesty at her own house yesterday. I think I never saw my mother better in her life. What blessings are

Mr. (afterwards Sir William) and Mrs. Pulteney. In this part of the Correspondence several Letters from Mrs. Carter to Miss Talbot are missing.

these!

these! and I trust I am thankful. My own little complaints have some douceurs attending them, as they procure me frequent visits from my good Doctor, who is in such full business that if I did not really want him I should never see him at all. Dr. Porteus has been so good as to appoint his son preacher at the new chapel, you may guess how glad I shall be of such a neighbour. Pray how comes it that you have seen so little of Lord and Lady Holdernesse, or rather that you have let *them* see so little of you this year.

I have wasted my time to-night in looking over old mourning, and then studying the Ordinary of Newgate—Pretty lively amusements.

Miss TALBOT to Mrs. CARTER.

Lambeth, *Dec.* 24, 1767.

My dear Mrs. Carter, it is really not from want of affection for you or anxiety about your health, that I have been all this while without writing; but ever since I have recovered any tolerable degree of health I have been oppressed with business, not even having had time to read an idle book. I write now on one knee, waiting for Mr. Parry about

about a poor woman, expecting Mrs. Govers with pills and caps, for I must take my bark, and dress to go to town all in half an hour, and have fifty things on my spirits besides. Three Letters have I dispatched since I began this, one to the steward in Worcestershire, one to a good woman who is to send us a kitchen-maid, and one to comfort the poor Mackenzies. None of these admitted delay, so *you* were postponed, and thus it continually happens. But I am very uneasy about your slow fever, and cannot help thinking, from my own little experience, that an ague is at best but an unpleasant and an unpromising remedy. Let me know, however, whether you have attained this very moderate point of ambition —how like indeed to all other ambition the successful ambitions might tell if they would, who equally expose themselves to hot and shaking fits. But I will not be ingenious, nor push the comparison so far as it might go. I begin to recover my inclination for going over Westminster Bridge, and have been several times to town, but, alas, have not reached Bath House, which indeed I wished much to do. I just saw Mrs. Montagu, quite well. You will be pleased to hear that Lady Grey's true and faithful affection for Lady Mary Gregory has shewn itself, by her taking her orphan daughter into her house. She removes thither next week. Lady Bell grows more and more amiable every day,

and

and we are now quite on the footing you would wish us to be.

The Abp. has had another pretty little fit of the gout in the right hand, which prevented his christening Prince Edward; he is however well again, thank God. My mother is in perfect health and spirits, and rejoicing your time of coming to town draws so near. When may we expect you? Do give us a few days, indeed as many as you can, pray do, and you shall have any apartment you please. I will not tell you one bit how the world goes on; come and learn for yourself. I am sure your health will mend on removing out of the sea air. Whether you can call on us by the way or not, do come to town soon.

Miss TALBOT to Mrs. CARTER.

Dec. 30, 1767.

We rejoice, dear Miss Carter, you are better; it is a sign it is not the rheumatism, or this bitter weather would not mend it. Bitter indeed—but I believe it was very needful for the earth. *Poor houseless wretches,* as Lear says, what will become of them? I fear you too will have a deep snow

snow to travel in. We are sincerely thankful to you, for your change of scheme in our favour. I am peculiarly so just now, as the snow has brought back all my aches and pains. I intended more, but have been prevented, so adieu till we meet; that will do me more good than any thing else.

Miss TALBOT to Mrs. CARTER.

Lambeth, *May* 31, 1768.

Do you forgive me, dear Mrs. Carter, for talking so uncomfortably to you as I did on Saturday, instead of thanking you for a whole winter's kindness? But it hurt me to part with you, and yet now I am glad you did not stay. I have taken airings in the coach these two days, and they have done very well: it is so fine I think of going out in the chair by and by.

June 7.

On Thursday we plucked up courage enough to go to Salt Hill, we came back on Saturday. The air delightful, the garden-house and landlady charming; but Dr. Stinton was the only person in company who had any spirits, and very useful he was.

On the whole I am glad we went, and was most heartily glad to come home again, for the effort was too much for my weak spirits. I think, in some respects, the Abp. is better; but still he is poorly. It grieved me much, I had not courage or spirits to venture into a post-chaise, while we were at Salt Hill, as far as Hitcham, but indeed I was not equal to it, and while *they* attempted an airing I stayed quietly sauntering in the inn garden, with Mrs. Govers for a chaperon.

This day I finish Pharamond: is Mrs. Sutton still in town, that I may return it to her? if not, when you write, pray return my thanks for the amusement it has afforded me. This day also I begin Mrs. Montagu's "Chevaliers de Malthe:" I rejoice to hear so good an account of her.

June 8.

I have been using all manner of exercise in the garden this morning, carried in a sedan, wheeled in a chair, which gives one much the same exercise as a cart, and the voiture I like best of all, walking on my two legs. The garden is sweet and gay, the whole border of the serpentine canal is filled with single pinks, red and white, which perfume the air and look sweet and soft beyond imagination.

You will have seen by the papers, I suppose, that Wilkes is sentenced to 1000*l.* fine, twenty-two

months imprisonment, and to find security for his good behaviour for seven years, and all again is quiet.

Mrs. CARTER to Miss TALBOT.

Deal, *June* 24, 1768

It grieved and disappointed me, my dear Miss Talbot, to find you so little the better for your excursion: thank God the Abp. has benefited rather more. Do pray ask Dr. Ford if you may try tar-water; I have a great opinion of it, and a small quantity I should think could not hurt you, even if it did you no good.

Mrs. Sutton * is not in town, but there is always somebody in the house, so you may send Pharamond whenever you please. I hope you find great amusement in the Chevaliers de Malthe. If you could not summon up spirit enough to go to Hitcham, why did not you at least send for some of the inhabitants to Salt Hill.—It would have been an opportunity of making two very good people very

* Miss Isabella Sutton to whom some of Mrs. Carter's Poems were addressed.

happy: to Mrs. Scott I know it would have been quite a festival.

I suppose London will be in full crowd this summer, as the King of Denmark I hear is certainly to come to England. He is, it seems, a very singular young man, and determined to do something to make himself talked of. It is to be hoped he will not take it into his head to set fire to the tower of London. By what I have heard of his character, I fear it affords no very comfortable prospects for our poor Princess. My best respects to Mrs. Talbot and the Abp., and pray let me know that you are all going on better and in a more comfortable way.

Mrs. CARTER to Miss TALBOT.

Deal, *July* 9, 1768.

Many thanks, dear Miss Talbot, for the trouble you have had in getting the poor girl into St. George's Hospital; she shall be sent up immediately. Now, having thanked you for what you have done, I am going to quarrel with you for what you have left undone--not one word do you say

say about the Abp. or yourself, and yet you well know how anxious I am about you both. I have thought too of Mrs. Talbot in all these terrible accounts of thunder and lightening. We had nothing but some harmless lightening here that evening; but there was one circumstance pretty remarkable—between seven and eight o'clock, after a cool day, there was a sudden heat, I think beyond any I ever felt in the open air: I was then walking on the sea-shore with Lady Holdernesse, and we were both in an instant gasping for breath: for the oppression is not to be described. When I came home I found several people who had been affected in the same way.—It did not last above a quarter of an hour.

I have not met with "Light Summer Reading for the Ladies." Indeed it would be *à pure perte* to spend my time in reading novels here; for most of them are so perfectly like the gossiping among the Misses in a country town, that it is only making a few visits, and one may have it all original and fresh. I owed your Light Summer Reading a spite, for your preferring it to my Knights of Malta. Indeed I never will give up the point, that the nine geniuses of the nine Miss Minifies*, however clubbed

* Nine sisters, who about that time wrote several novels jointly, which were then reckoned ingenious, but which have since

clubbed and compounded, can ever arrive at the amusement of one Vertôt. Mrs. Douglas is finely recovered, and gone with my father to Woodchurch. In the mean time my aunt and I are as dull and quiet as heart can wish: excepting some small interruption from a bawling cook and swearing footman; and though they content themselves with bawling and swearing at each other, I am by no means edified by the echo.—I thank my stars we are soon to be quit of them. What a strange difference there is in the natural dispositions of human creatures, and with what a happy obstinacy do some minds repel the influence of external circumstances; our other servant, till she came here, lived in a tavern, and she is quiet, decent, modest, and gentle to the highest degree.

I am writing by owl light, and shall put out your eyes and my own, but as this is one of the most summer-like evenings we have had, I was willing to enjoy as long as possible the sitting without candles.

since been so excelled by the many admirable performances of that kind as to be no longer known. Vertot was the author of the "Hist. des Chevaliers de Malthe," as well as of many other much esteemed historical works.

Miss TALBOT to Mrs. CARTER.

Lambeth, *July* 23, 1768.

The Archbishop bids me say only that he has no new physician, that his old ones say he is not worse, that he does not think himself materially so; that I have been walking a great deal in the garden to-day, and that I am always and at all times your's, &c.

Mrs. CARTER to Miss TALBOT.

Wingham, *July* 26, 1768.

I am extremely obliged to the Abp. for commissioning you to write those few words, my dear Miss Talbot, which reached me so seasonably, for I had just before heard from a person just arrived from town, that his Grace was extremely ill. By comparing the circumstances of this account with the last intelligence I had received from you, I found good reason to hope it was not true, but yet

yet I felt uncomfortable, and was anxious for a more certain contradiction, when your Letter arrived and made me quite happy.

I had great hopes from three successive fine days, that the weather was growing more favourable for us invalids. But yesterday it returned as bad as ever.

I came here on Sunday afternoon to spend a few days with Mrs. Cosnan*; it is a delightful place, but my head will not allow me the enjoyment of it. I long much to hear how you are, so pray write speedily.

Since I wrote the above, a gentleman called here and mentioned his having read in Sunday night's paper that his Grace was attended by four physicians; I feel greatly alarmed about it; a line to relieve me, pray.

* The *Bethia*, to whom one of Mrs. Carter's Poems was addressed; daughter to Sir Tho. D'Aeth, bart. and wife, first of Herbert Palmer, esq. and then of Lt. Col. Cosnan.

Miss TALBOT to Mrs. CARTER.

Lambeth, *Aug.* 3, 1763.

In so great a calamity it will somewhat comfort you to hear that my poor mother and I are well, composed, and resigned.

Adieu.

Miss TALBOT to Mrs. CARTER.

Lambeth, *Aug.* 6, 1763.

Forgive, dear Mrs. Carter, the distress I gave you.—I meant you should have had a Letter the post before, and in my distress of mind forgot it. Circumstances of the greatest distress have been mixed with our heavy affliction, and I more than ever see cause for thankfulness to an overruling Providence. God be thanked our minds are supported in comfort, and our healths wonderfully preserved.

Your kindness is great and most acceptable—do come and assist us; but do not hurry yourself.

Come

Come at your leisure and convenience any time next week, not sooner however than Thursday. Dr. D. Burton stays with us till Wednesday *. My cousin William, a most useful friend, some time longer. Sweet good Mr. Ford will be with us as much as possible. Dr. Berkeley has been fetched away, else he would not have left us; I am glad he has for his own sake, he was so very deeply affected. Your coming will be a balm and cordial to my mother's spirits and mine, and you will greatly help us in many businesses that must come on.

I find a sealed Letter †, which I want to deliver into your own hands. Dear kind friend adieu.—I hope you have not been too much hurt. I avoid *the* affecting subject of my heart, yet my head fails in writing even this. Adieu, and a good journey.

* He was one of the Archbishop's executors.

† Of this Letter, no vestige remained among Mrs. Carter's papers, and its contents are not known.

Miss

Miss TALBOT to Mrs. CARTER.

Chart, *Oct.* 7, 1768.

Where are *you?* Dear Mrs. Carter. God be thanked we are safe here in this pretty place with three quiet good friends who are much your's. We got out yesterday soon after twelve. —We left poor Ford in a cold-fingered state, and poor Mrs. Frost very sorry, and all the good folks of the house clustered about the door, it was grievous to see them. We did not get here till past five, so long did my poor good uncle wait for his dinner. All this day has been quite tranquil. A thousand times ten thousand thanks, my dear friend, for all your kindness to us; for the present adieu. I slept quite well.

Miss TALBOT to Mrs. CARTER.

Chart, *Oct.* 16, 1768.

About once a week I mean, if I can contrive it, to let you know how we go on. I have written

written above twenty Letters since I have been here, and I do not foresee they are likely to decrease. Yet I long to have leisure for quiet contemplation and abundant reading. One must use exercise too, and unfavourable as the weather is I have been tempted to walk. I am much less lame than I was, and with my stick can go up and down the pretty hilly wood walks here very cleverly. I am now so well acquainted with the coach-road to Dorking that I take pleasure in a drive. In my present cowardly state of spirits the first trial of any airing costs me dear, but I am rewarded coming back which is always pleasant. To our great vexation we have not yet been allowed to go to church. I thank God my mother's spirits begin to mend; and Mr. Cornwall's quietly chearful spirits, and his very obliging attentions, and saying little lively natural things on purpose to divert her, have had their effect. I like him more and more every day.

You will be glad to hear that we found them here reading Mosheim. They are in the second volume, which we read in the evenings; and I have got the first in my room here studying it with great pleasure. There is a good little physician who lives at Dorking, who makes an agreeable addition to our society.—He is an old man with as much appearance of humanity and sweetness of temper as I ever saw,

and

and possessing a great deal of knowledge; his name is Smith.

From Mr. Frost I hear that he has found (O, careless wretches Dr. D. B. and I were! in an open cupboard) the long looked for parchments and papers, in size about a foot square. My mind is much the lighter for this *trouvaille*.

Oct. 23.

Poor Mr. Cornwall has got the gout, which came on so violently in his foot yesterday at tea-time, that pity for him, joined to inevitable recollections, made our evening very dull and melancholy; and James just returned from miserable Lambeth did not enliven it: all there at wrongs, the poor cats all but starved, the polls are better off.

Mr. Mylne thinks my mother's house will be ready for us in a month; they seem to go on well there, and I hope we shall feel tolerably comfortable when we get into it; but the most agreeable thought (as I experienced last night when we were minuting over all these things) will be, that it cannot be long before we may expect you to enliven our solitary days.—Not the less solitary for being past, perhaps, one-half of them in the midst of more people than one would wish, at least in such small rooms. Oh, London! how little do I like

the

the thoughts of thee! Londres "qui m a vû naître, et que mon cœur abhorre!" The peace, the silence, the bel ozio, the green hills, the harmless flocks, the every thing here in the country is delightful—but I do not like *this* country the less, by any means, for its having a daily communication with that odious town: and Mosheim has really convinced me that the desart unsociable system is a very wrong and a false one. In the main he seems a very sensible and candid writer—now and then we differ, and I grumble over my book. Adieu, kind companion and assistant of our melancholy weeks.

Miss TALBOT to Mrs. CARTER.

Chart, *Nov.* 18, 1763.

Who do you think has been to visit us this morning, dear Mrs. Carter, Lady Grey and Lady Bell; there was somewhat so kind in their coming, and they both looked so heartily pleased with their expedition, that it was a joy to see them; they kindly stayed three hours.—My uncle took them through his woods, while my mother and I went

went by a dryer way to meet them at the top of the hill. Oh, how pleasant would it be to see you, fair mountain nymph, gliding over these green ascents. This thought has often occurred to my mother, but for my own sake (begging Mrs. Cornwall's pardon and my uncle's who most sincerely wish you here) I am better contented to think of seeing you in town, when we shall want you more.

The day too has been as kind in its way as la belle Marquise. All unclouded sunshine and balmy air, and the prettiest little bit of moon to piece out their afternoon light, for we reckon it must be six before they reached St. James's Square.

Poor Duke of Newcastle! we had heard of his illness before. A melancholy circumstance is, that the Duchess was just gone to Bath, and the express who went with the account of his seizure, found *her* so ill, that no one durst tell her his message. If it should please God, after a happy marriage of above fifty years, to take them within a few days of each other, she will escape the pain of hearing what it must be dreadful to break to her. In such sort of sad scenes sets the glory, the gaiety, the happiness of the most distinguished mortal life. But I believe they were both really good persons, and then the view brightens and leaves one's mind chearful.

Nov.

Nov. 20.

I am fit for nothing to-day, though I have slept well; nothing disheartens and grieves me so much as a Sunday without going to church—and the difficulty of going to church here (only for fear of getting cold) will be the only thing that will give me a real comfort in getting from this pleasant place to odious London. We were one Sunday at Dorking church, and though I did not it chill, we were laid up the whole week. Last night, after a fine dry day, we went to sleep, in full hopes of the happiness of venturing again to-day.—All night it most wickedly rained, and till past eight this morning; we desponded, my mother fearful for *me*, I for *her*. My uncle went by himself, and now it is as perversely a very fine day. To be ill *here* is a thing not to be risqued, but one may, like the fine world, grow so much *too* cowardly in these respects, that it terrifies one. The workmen will be out of our house on Tuesday. Adieu.

Miss

Miss TALBOT to Mrs. CARTER.

Grosvenor Street, *Dec.* 23, 1768.

God be thanked, here we are, dear Miss Carter, arrived in safety at our pretty commodious cheerful dwelling, and now we want only that you may have as fine a day for your journey as we had, and that it may be soon.—Yes, we shall want my kind uncle and good Mr. and Mrs. Cornwall safe in town before any deep snow.

I will mix no melancholy lookings back in this Letter. May it please God to give us all a happy, though to some of us, a very serious Christmas.

Mr. Mylne and good Mrs. Francis have done wonders, and all is very clever indeed. Adieu, bon voyage.

Miss TALBOT to Mrs. CARTER.

Grosvenor Street, *May* 30, 1769.

Make yourself easy, dear Miss Carter, as far as you can, and do not let *us* at least interrupt your enjoyment of your pleasant villa, it would be hard indeed, after your friendly visits here so added to our comfort in town! But indeed I am better in every respect but mere lameness, *that* indeed is worse, and my journeys up and down stairs to-day have been very tedious. I have taken eight airings de suite and find them reviving: we are both desperately in love with a sweet village called Kilburne, where the air and grass are as fresh and sweet as a thousand miles from London.

You hear from Mrs. Montagu, and I hope from the amiable Pitts and Dunbars. From Mrs M—'s house I learn absolutely nothing, and dear good Lady Frances who came here this evening to enquire after you, says and laments that there is no way of hearing of them: through you I hope we may, and may it be good!

Mrs.

Mrs. CARTER to Miss TALBOT.

Deal, *May* 27, 1769.

In all the embarras of unpacking and company, I have stole away for a few minutes to give you the information you desired, my dear Miss Talbot, of my being safely arrived, thank God, at the end of my journey. I was so happy as to find all my friends here tolerably well.

After so long an absence, I should think with pleasure of settling myself quietly at home, if my mind was at ease about the dear friends from whom I have parted. But this, alas! is by no means the case. The leaving you so very far from well; the receiving, upon the whole, such very uncomfortable accounts of Mrs. Montagu, and the present melancholy situation of the Pitt and Dunbar families, sink my spirits and damp all the pleasure I should otherwise feel at my return to a situation for which I have so many reasons to be thankful. God grant that I may soon hear a better account of you all.

I long to hear that there is something settled about your going out of town. Do pray write me just as many lines as will tell me how you go on. I hope you are not the worse for this beautiful

rain, that has done so much good to the country. I beg my affectionate compliments to Mrs. Talbot, a thousand thanks to you both. Better health, and every other blessing attend you.

Miss TALBOT to Mrs. CARTER.

Grosvenor Street, *June* 20, 1769.

Next week we propose to move to Richmond: hitherto London has been more than tolerable, the airings seldom dusty, and always pleasant. I am better, though I think of late lamer than ever. How solitude will do with us I know not; for even here, where one sees some one or other every day, we have sadly felt the want of the absentees. Do not expect to hear from me again till we are at Richmond; we expect to dine there next Friday.

Miss

Miss TALBOT to Mrs. CARTER.

Richmond, *July* 8, 1769.

HERE we have been, dear Mrs. Carter, these ten days, and I ought to have told you so, but I was not in spirits. I am lamer and lamer; but I am otherwise, thank God, well. With much pain and fatigue I moved about, till an unlucky stumble has made all walking at present impracticable; so that for two days past I have only been wheeled from my chamber to my dressing-room: and this merely from rheumatic spasms in my legs. My mother is a little oppressed by the heat, but would else (were it not, alas, for the uneasiness I unwillingly give her) be quite well.

We are here in the pleasantest place, and the most eligible for us at present that one could wish for. A very cheerful commodious house, with one very large and delightful room in it, surrounded by a garden, which supplies us with all the luxuries of summer. The air excellent, and the neighbourhood infinitely agreeable. Lady Grey has left us every thing she could think of to contribute to our comfort or amusement. And in a particular manner recommended us to a whole neighbourhood

of

of agreeable people, who accordingly pay us all possible civilities.

Miss TALBOT to Mrs. CARTER.

Richmond, *July* 25, 1769.

This, my dear Mrs. Carter, is an interested Letter: I should not have thought of tempting you from Deal, but as Mrs. Montagu *has* tempted you to Sunning Hill, you seem within reach, and I cannot help hoping to have a sight of you here. If you come through London they tell me it cannot be above two miles out of your way to make Richmond in your road to Sunning Hill. We have two excellent spare rooms, so that you may be very sure of one: and if you could of your bounty give us two or three days it would be noble; but even with one we would try to be content.

I am, I thank God, free from pain, and I hope better, but unable to walk more than a very few steps. I amuse away the mornings very well, between reading and painting flowers; and there are few afternoons in which we have not some agreeable company

company or other.—A few days ago we had Miss Finch and her sister. I long to go to Kew, but that, I fear, will not be this good while yet.

Am I in the right for trying to amuse away those hours, which would otherwise be hours of heavy and painful recollections?—Alas, I cannot help recollecting many omissions I was guilty of this sad time twelvemonth—many inestimable opportunities lost by a needless care of my own health and spirits: and all these months since what have I been doing but merely nursing myself! What improvements have I made from trials so heavy! I cannot even trace out what particular fault was to be corrected by them.—And what answerable return have I made for so many blessings as have been mingled with them? I live at present almost wholly to indulgence. Come, I must leave off, or you will be angry with me.

It will give my mother great joy to see you, therefore come if you can. Let us make her all the amends we can for the many uneasy days she has suffered here while I was so piteous. Indeed I was almost out of hope; my spirits quite gone: —but, thank God, all is well now. Do you correspond with sweet Mrs. John Pitt? and how are they all? Now, had I not better (it is after supper) be reading Bell Fermor to my mother, than so ill filling this sheet to you.

Mrs.

Mrs. CARTER to Miss TALBOT.

Hill Street, *August* 9, 1769.

There is something so seducing, dear Miss Talbot, in writing to you by the Penny-Post that I cannot resist it. Not that I think you would be under any great solicitude about my getting home quietly last night in spite of the bad character of the roads; for I reached London in such good time, that if I had been robbed I might have sued the county.—Perhaps you will think it would have been worth while to have been robbed, for the satisfaction of suing the county of Middlesex.

I called at Mrs. A. Pitt's, she was not at home, and delivered Sir J. Yorke's Letter to Miss Finch, with the condition annexed, of her returning it herself.

I sat out on my city expedition this morning, where I met with an adventure, which, I believe, you will think much more formidable than all the terrors of the Richmond road. I was to call on a person in my way, to accompany me to the South Sea House; and my nearest route was through Newgate. On going up Snow-Hill I observed a pretty

pretty many people assembled, but did not much regard them, till, as I advanced, I found the crowd thicken, and by the time I was got into the midst of them I heard the dreadful toll of St. Sepulchre's bell, and found I was attending an execution. As I do not very well understand the geography of Newgate, I thought if I could push through the postern I should find the coast clear on the other side, but to my utter dismay I found myself in a still greater mob than before, and very little able to make my way through them. Only think of me in the midst of such heat and suffocation, with the danger of having my arms broke, to say nothing of the company by which I was surrounded, with near 100*l.* in my pocket. In this exigency I applied to one of the crowd for assistance, and while he was hesitating, another man, who saw my difficulty, very good-naturedly said to me, " come, madam, I will do my best to get you along." To this volunteer in my service, who was tolerably creditable and clean, considering the corps to which he belonged, I most cordially gave my hand; and without any swearing, or bawling, or bustle whatever, by mere gentle persevering dexterity, he conducted me, I thank God, very safely through. You will imagine that I expressed a sufficient degree of gratitude to my conductor, which I did in the best language I could find; a circumstance which is never

never thrown away upon the common people, as you will acknowledge from the speech which he made me in return.—" That all he had done was due to my person, and all he could do was due to my merit." This high strain of complimental oratory is really no embellishment of my story; but literally what my hero said. What a figure he would have made in the days of chivalry! In the midst of all my perplexities, I could not help remarking a singular circumstance in the discourse of the mob, in speaking of the unhappy criminal, that he was to *die* to-day; and I scarcely once heard the expression of his being to be *hanged*. To trace the cause of this delicacy, is a good problem for the investigators of human nature.

As I thought this history of my city adventures would amuse Mrs. Talbot and you, I ought to prevent any kind concern you might feel from the apprehension of its having hurt me, which I do not think it has. I was immoderately heated at first getting out of the crowd, but it soon went off, and except being extremely tired, I am about as well as usual to-night, though not equal to any more adventures. I hear but an indifferent account of the poor young Duchess of Beaufort, the bruises still continue very bad. The Lady Finches are inconsolable for their father.

Mrs. CARTER to Miss TALBOT.

Sunning Hill, *Aug.* 16, 1769.

I HOPE you received a Letter from me, dear Miss Talbot, which I wrote before I left London, otherwise you will wonder what is become of me. I deferred writing to you till I could tell you how the waters agree with us. Mrs. Montagu is, upon the whole, I think, better; an account which she received of her nephew not being quite well, has hurried her down to Sandleford for a few days; but it was thought most advisable I should remain here drinking the waters, of which I can only say they do not disagree with me, though I am not yet arrived at drinking a full dose. Here I am straggling about by myself over these lone commons very like a solitary goose. We are lodged in a house which was lately a baronet's seat, so it is very spacious, and has a good garden, partly laid out in wood walks, &c. which are pretty though not extensive. At present we are the only lodgers, but the largeness of the house, if it was full, would be as inconvenient and as noisy as an inn. The breakfasting-room is in the garden, but

as

as it is filled only one day in the week this is no great grievance. The spring is about half a mile from us, and I rise early and walk there, and am back about the time Mrs. M. is stirring, and then accompany her.

I am extremely pleased with all I have seen of this country, though whether before I leave it I may not wish for the sight of corn-fields is not clear. We dined on Monday at Mrs. Dunbar's, and it gave me great pleasure to find it so sweet a place; it answers the idea of a ferme orné more exactly than any thing I ever saw, and has an air of tranquillity and cheerfulness which makes it appear like the abode of virtue and contentment, and is perfectly adapted to the mind of its sweet mistress. It is about three miles from hence. Mr. J. Pitt's about half a mile. The family is expected there next week. I wish the first days of dear Mrs. Pitt's return to Sunning Hill and to Arlington Street were over, for they must awaken many a painful remembrance. We met Lady Primrose at Mrs. Dunbar's, but we have not yet seen Lady F. Coningesby, though I hope we shall go to Langley as soon as Mrs. M. returns. We dined one day at Mr. Wilmot's at Farnborough, about ten miles from Sunning, and I dare say you will think us very intrepid heroines to travel over Bagshot Heath

by

by moon-light, but our valour was not signalized by any adventures.

I think there are not above a dozen water-drinkers: we are mighty quiet and rural except of a Monday, when a public breakfast and fiddles collect all the misses round the country.

By the last accounts I had of good Mr. Penn he was thought to be mending, and his physicians had strong hopes of his recovery, but he feels nothing like it himself. He is perfectly sensible, composed, and resigned. Neither his head nor his limbs were affected, only his side. The poor young Duchess of Beaufort is not yet pronounced out of danger; her being in a wretched, inconvenient, uncomfortable inn is an additional circumstance of distress. I long to know how you go on, and whether you have gained any ground since I left you. Pray send a line soon.

Miss TALBOT to Mrs. CARTER.

Richmond, *Aug.* 21, 1769.

I ought indeed, my dear Mrs. Carter, to have answered you sooner, for I have received both

both your excellent Letters, but indeed I have not been well enough, nor in spirits ever since you was here. Do not be uneasy about me, I shall scramble through it. You may be sure I am the lower just now, on account of poor sweet Lady Margaret; but her sufferings, and all our anxieties about her, are for ever at an end.

Pray do convey to Mr. Penn's family the excellencies of strong sage-tea, and sage-wine, drank in quantities.

I did not know till this morning of Mr. Dunbar's great acquisition.—I hope it will not make them unhappy by drawing them into Ireland and a life of ostentation, but that they will live on in their own quiet way, and do good with the surplus. We rejoice truly in Mrs. Montagu's amendment, and hope soon to hear of your's. Adieu, Miss Jefferies is coming, and I must endeavour to get a nap first. I continue my airings, and hope they do me good.

Miss

Miss TALBOT to Mrs. CARTER.

Richmond, *Sept.* 9, 1769.

Do not imagine, dear Mrs. Carter, that I will treat you with any very good account of my health, till you send me a better of Mrs. Montagu's. However, by way of encouragement I will tell you, my fever, which has been pretty brisk, seems to be quite subdued. I see Dr. Ford every day, look well, and have never lain in bed past twelve, and but once so long, and find amusement enough to fill up the day pretty well. We could not have been in so clever a place as this is, circumstanced as we are, this summer. Has Mrs. Montagu been in town for better advice? There is Addington famous, I know. Then there is Warren and Huck, good by hear-say.—But, perhaps, by this time she may be well enough to have prescribed herself a trip to the Jubilee.—Would she were well enough to be able! I would trust her for being wise enough to let it alone. But indeed she should be cautioned at present not to exert her fine spirits as she does. She should sit stupid and dozing half the day, and play with baby-houses as I do. Yet with all my endeavours to be stupidly quiet, I was half demo

lished last Post-day by a paquet of Letters. My mind had run up and down, through ten thousand varieties of ideas and places, till before I had half read them through, I was tired as a ploughman at sunset, and forced to lay them by for two hours, and try to compose myself. Then I ventured to take up Emin's (now you jump) general Letter of eight folio pages to all his noble friends, just arrived to Dr. Dumaresque *, to whom it was enclosed, and from him to me, to circulate first to the Duke of Northumberland; but it was dated alas, so long ago as June 22, 1767; he was then on the rock of Gulistan, in Armenia, free and well, but very poor. It contains a history of four years, difficult to understand, because it treats of petty tyrants and clans and places that we know little of, but highly interesting, and tallying exactly with those Armenian Letters to him, of which I have got translations. He supports through all his difficulties his heroic and Christian character: and there is one instance of the highest bravery and truest gallantry that will delight you, and I hope, make even *your* strictness forgive impromptu vision, which could alone have saved above two thousand ladies from destruction.

* Dr. Dumaresque did not die till the year 1806, in the 95th year of his age.

I sent

I sent, by a safe hand, dear good Mrs. J. Pitt's welcome order to Mrs. Bruce. My love to her and her angel sister, and above all to Mrs. Montagu.

Mrs. CARTER to Miss TALBOT.

Deal, *Oct.* 2, 1769.

I am so impatient to know how you do, dear Miss Talbot, that I should not have deferred writing a single Post, if my hand would have allowed me: to-day it is the better for my losing a little blood, which relieved me immediately. My journey was, I thank God, very safe, and as pleasant as sunshine could make it. I got to Tunstal* by dinner, and found my nephews in a course of bark, but upon the whole tolerably well, tumbling on the floor with their several studies before them; the youngest, Montagu, with a book in one hand and hugging and stroking a purring kitten with the other, which is a great favourite with him, and I believe would be so with you if it fell in your way.

* A village in Kent, near Sittingbourne, of which her brother-in-law Dr. Pennington was rector.

I stayed only an hour at Canterbury, called on Dr. Berkeley, met Mr. Ford, and was rejoiced to find they leave Canterbury to-day for Richmond. Mr. Ford, I hope, will not be a mere bird of passage. I had the happiness of finding all my friends here well, except Mrs. Underdown, who has a weakness in her limbs, the remains of an attack of gout or rheumatism; would to God your's was no worse. My brother and sister are making a tour through several parts of England, and at Southampton met with a lady, of whom they heard a very extraordinary account. She is about eighteen, and very beautiful: so far they saw. But the wonderful part of the story is, that she has already written two plays, two novels, two sermons, and several poems; she is at present engaged in writing comments on the Revelations, on which subject she is corresponding with a dignitary of the church. She was brought up in a convent, it seems, so she must have a strong impulse of genius, as I believe nothing more effectually fritters away all the powers of the understanding than that kind of education.

Mrs. Montagu is very anxious to know how you do: I hope before I write to her to have a better account to send her, and do pray let me know if you acquire any degree of flesh, for nothing in your illness so terrifies and dispirits me as your being so extremely thin. I wish you would talk to Dr. Ford

particu-

particularly about your side: I have been alarming myself ever since I left you, that the discharge may be too great. God direct all for the best!

Miss TALBOT to Mrs. CARTER.

Richmond, *Oct.* 7, 1769.

Forgive me, dear friend, for not writing before, I am rejoiced that you found relief from bleeding. These last two days have not your bones ached? I am sure mine have. However I have thrice got down stairs on the straps very easily, and am going again into the great room. Indeed I thank God I am mending. I continue my passion for minced partridge, and wish, without writing, I could thank Mrs. Montagu for her kind and welcome supply; at present we are well stocked. The symptom that alarmed you is gradually lessening, so I hope to look as jolly by Christmas as your ladyship. Your nephews, and their books, and their kittens, are quite a picture. Adieu, ma très chère.

Dr. BERKELEY * to Mrs. CARTER.

Richmond, *Oct.* 24, 1769.

DEAR MADAM,

I am, alas! the unwilling messenger of most unwelcome news. My wife and I came hither last Monday, where we have had the grief to see our dear and excellent friend daily declining; she has kept her bed ever since Thursday. Drs. Warren and Ford afford not the least hope, and it is not supposed that her severe trial can last above a day or two. On Saturday morning she sent for me at six: when after much *cheerful* conversation, on her nearly approaching change, she desired me to write Letters from her mouth to a few intimates. —You, madam, being included in that number. When I was ready, she changed her mind, resolving to postpone the business. This morning in another conversation she named it again, but added that she could not now sufficiently attend to such matters: She is very much weaker to-day; she

* A very good and amiable man, Prebendary of Canterbury, and son to the well known Bishop of Cloyne. This, and Miss Jefferies's Letters are inserted as conveying an interesting account of Miss Talbot's last hours.

takes

takes opiates at night. Mrs. G. Berkeley will certainly not leave her, and Mr. W. Talbot of Chart is here, as is Mr. Ford. Poor Mrs. Talbot seems more composed than you could have expected. My wife mingles her tears with your's on this doleful occasion, as does dear Madam, &c.

Miss JEFFREYS to Mrs. CARTER.

Richmond, *Oct.* 26, 1769.

MADAM,

Miss Talbot on Tuesday last called me to her bed-side, and said to me as follows:—"I wish you would write to Mrs. Carter, I should be happy for some faithful friend to tell I have been ill and confined to my bed for some days; she will wonder she has not heard from me and be uneasy; tell her in a few Posts I hope to write to her myself:"—those were her words; but far from being her thoughts. After this conversation Dr. Berkeley told me he had wrote, which was the reason I deferred it till this Post. On Sunday last I was with her half an hour, her death was then daily expected; her

resignation

resignation and patience through all her sufferings you are well acquainted with; it exceeds all description; cheerfulness does not express her countenance or manner (I mean on Sunday last) there was a joy I never shall forget, and founded, I am certain, on the very few hours she hoped to remain here; and she told me she had that feel within her, that spoke her happiness near. Since that time she has mended daily; her lameness is better, she suffers little pain, gets a great deal of sleep in the day, and by the help of opium has tolerable nights; but, I am sorry to say, there is not the least hope of her recovery, and yet I fear she may last weeks in her present state. I think her countenance has lost of its serenity, nor do I believe she feels so happy: she had made up her mind, and is sorry to return to this world again. I never was acquainted with Miss Talbot till this summer, but she has made such an impression on me that I shall never forget, and shall for ever revere her memory. I am thankful I have known her, and have sometimes hopes I may be the better all my life for some conversations passed in this last illness.

Mrs. Talbot is pure well, and really bears up surprizingly, and seeing her in that state is a great comfort to our sweet friend.—I was the person that

that took courage and told Mrs. Talbot last week the little hope there was of Miss Talbot's recovery.—She was as much astonished and thunderstruck as if she had thought her daughter in perfect health; but I really looked on it as cruelty to deceive her when the fatal blow appeared so near. Dr. and Mrs. Berkeley are with them, and it is impossible to shew more friendship and kind attention than they do.

Dr. BERKELEY to Mrs. CARTER.

Richmond, *Oct.* 28, 1769.

DEAR MADAM,

Dr. Ford has just left our dear suffering friend, in whom the last three days have produced a most unexpected amendment—to you, however, I will in confidence confess that her disorder is a *cancer:* this I did not know when I wrote last; and as the physicians declare it "absolutely incurable." I now more than ever pity poor Mrs. Talbot: *she is not entrusted with this dismal secret*, which has been safely kept for nearly three years from all persons except the

Abp.

Abp., the medical people, and Govers*. My wife sends her best compliments to you, and I am, &c.

Mrs. JEFFREYS to Mrs. CARTER.

Richmond, *Nov.* 3, 1769.

Mrs. Jeffreys presents her compliments to Mrs. Carter, and has the pleasure to inform her Miss Talbot continues to mend daily; she is now taken up, and sits in the dressing-room three or four hours every day. Notwithstanding this amendment Miss Talbot's friends (she fears) have no grounds to flatter themselves with, as there can be no possibility of a recovery. They talk of removher to town in a chair, but at present it appears very impracticable. She suffers very little pain, and talks very cheerfully to her friends.

* Mrs. Carter also had long been acquainted with it.

Mrs.

Mrs. JEFFREYS to Mrs. CARTER.

Richmond, *Nov.* 8, 1769.

DEAR MADAM,

Miss Talbot has continued mending every day since I wrote last; she has for some days past been in the dressing-room from one till eight o'clock, and eats meat, partridge I mean. On Sunday last she saw a number of people, I was with her the whole afternoon, and do not remember ever to have seen her in better spirits, nor was she fatigued when she went to-bed, but had a very good night.

But what will most surprize you is, that yesterday Dr. Ford came down and carried her to town, and I had last night the pleasure to hear she bore her journey extremely well, and was in very good spirits. All this sounds well, but I fear has no stability. Dr. Ford said on Friday, that from present appearances he thought she might last about six weeks: in my own opinion she may last as many months, and yet was I to hear this day she was departed it would not surprize me. She has certainly gathered great strength this last week; her life hangs on the finest thread, and God only knows when that will break.

Mrs.

MRS. JEFFREYS TO MRS. CARTER.

Richmond, *Nov.* 16, 176[illegible].

DEAR MADAM,

I YESTERDAY went to town on purpose to see Miss Talbot, and her amendment in looks, and every other respect, astonished me. I told her I should write to you to-day; she desired me to say how much obliged she was for all your kind attentions to her; that she depends on seeing you in town at your usual time, and should any thing happen for her to wish to see you sooner she will let you know.

My last Letter was wrote in such a hurry that I did not say half what I felt on the occasion that had given you so much uneasiness. I was the cause of it, and am very sorry for it, but certainly acted for the best, but very unlucky it proved.

MISS

Miss TALBOT to Mrs. CARTER.

Grosvenor Street, *Nov.* 12, 1769.

My dear kind Mrs. Carter, you must not come to town till your usual time. God be praised I am got safe hither, and slowly mending every day. At present Mrs. Berkeley has the infinite goodness to be in the house with us, and to leave her own family till she is less essential to me. Should we really want you sooner I will honestly let you know, depend upon it I will *. [Want you one does always when one has you not, but there is such a thing as consideration]. I think we can spare you, indeed I am sure we can, till the first days in January. This is a long Letter for me; with best thanks adieu.

* The following sentence, inclosed within brackets, was erased in Miss Talbot's Letter, but not so as to be illegible; and it seems such an instance of want of selfishness in that weak state, that it was thought proper to insert it.

Mrs.

Mrs. CARTER to Miss TALBOT.

Deal, *Nov.* 13, 1769.

You were extremely kind, my dear Miss Talbot, in giving me comfort of seeing a Letter in your own hand, and I am truly thankful to find you are returned safely to London: but my spirits have been too deeply depressed by the shock they received from the danger of my losing one of the dearest and most distinguished blessings of my life, to allow me suddenly to recover any tolerable degree of cheerfulness. I depend on your promise of letting me know whenever you wish me to come to town. It is a great relief to my mind that you have so kind and useful a friend with you. I have been greatly obliged to Dr. Berkeley and Mrs. Jeffreys for the attention which they have been so good as to shew me. I beg you will not attempt to write yourself till you are better able, for I see by the hand too plainly, alas, how difficult it must have been to you. Mrs. Montagu will, I am sure, frequently let me hear how you do. God grant she may be able to send me comfortable accounts of you. I must not fatigue you with too long a Letter, so adieu my dearest Miss Talbot.

Mrs.

MRS. CARTER TO MRS. VESEY*.

Clarges Street, *Jan.* 15, 1770.

YOU will be so kindly solicitous about me, my dear Mrs. Vesey, when you see in the papers a confirmation of the reality of my apprehensions about my dear Miss Talbot, that I cannot forbear writing you some account of myself. I am tolerably well, and my spirits, though low, are very composed. With the deepest feeling of of my own unspeakable loss of one of the dearest and most invaluable blessings of my life, I am to the highest degree thankful to the Divine goodness for removing her from the multiplied and aggravated sufferings, which in a longer struggle with such a distemper, must probably have been unavoidable. The calm and peaceable sorrow of tenderness and affection, sweetly alleviated by the

* This Letter has been already printed in the "Memoirs of Mrs. Carter," but it was thought proper to add it to this Series of Letters, in order to shew the termination of Miss Talbot's illness. Perhaps by this time the reader may have taken so much interest in the fate of this amiable and excellent young woman, as not to deem the reprinting of this affecting account, given by the most intimate of her friends, a needless repetition.

joyful

joyful assurance of her happiness, is a delightful sentiment compared with what I have suffered for these last two or three months.

Two or three days before her death she was seized with a sudden hoarseness and cough, which seemed the effect of a cold, and from which bleeding relieved her; but there remained an oppression from phlegm which was extremely troublesome to her. On the ninth this symptom increased, and she appeared heavy and sleepy, which was attributed to an opiate the night before. I staid with her till she went to bed, with an intention of going afterwards into her room, but was told she was asleep. I went away about nine, and in less than an hour afterwards she waked; and after the struggle of scarcely a minute, it pleased God to remove her spotless soul from its mortal sufferings to that heaven for which her whole life had been an uninterrupted preparation. Never surely was there a more perfect pattern of evangelical goodness, decorated by all the ornaments of a highly improved understanding, and recommended by a sweetness of temper, and an elegance and politeness of manners, of a peculiar and more engaging kind than in any other character I ever knew.

I am just returned from seeing all that was mortal of my angelic friend deposited in the earth. I do not mean that I went in ceremony, which,

had it been proper, would have been too strong a trial for my spirits, but privately with two other of her intimate friends. I felt it would be a comfort to me, on that most solemn occasion, to thank Almighty God for delivering her from her sufferings, and to implore his assistance to prepare me to follow her. Little, alas! infinitely too little, have I yet profited by the blessing of such an example. God grant that her memory, which I hope will ever survive in my heart, may produce a happier effect.

Adieu, my dear friend, God bless you, and conduct us both to that happy assembly, where the spirits of the just shall dread no future separation! And may we both remember that awful truth, that we can hope to die the death of the righteous only by resembling their lives.

LETTERS

FROM

MRS. CARTER

TO

MRS. VESEY.

ADVERTISEMENT.

In the pacquet which contained Mrs. Carter's Letters to Mrs. Vesey, which were returned to her, in pursuance of that Lady's directions, after her decease, was inclosed also the following Note from her to Mrs. Carter:

Lucan, *Nov.* 22, 1774.

"*Accept, my dear Mrs. Carter, my last thanks for the benefit and delight of your friendship and conversation. Perhaps at the time you open this box, I shall have still more reason to be grateful. I leave you Mrs. Dunbar's picture, and the inestimable treasure of your own Letters, wishing much you would give them for the improvement of future minds.—You will still be doing that good you loved upon earth, when you are removed to those happy regions where I wish I could deserve to meet you.*"

In those "happy regions" it is hoped, and may upon Christian principles be believed,

that Mrs. Carter is now indeed receiving her reward, and perhaps sensible of the grateful affection of her amiable friend. Though the humility of her mind, (if she ever saw Mrs. Vesey's note) might naturally prevent her from complying with the request contained in it, the Editor can have no motive to induce him to withhold these Letters from the Public. Indeed his own opinion entirely coincides with that of Mrs. Vesey; and he hopes, and is persuaded, that this Work may not only prove a source of innocent amusement; but also, by the blessing of God upon it, be of some use, some advantage to the world.

LETTERS

FROM

MRS. CARTER TO MRS. VESEY.

LETTER I.

Deal, *April* 29, 1763.

IT was some relief, my dear Mrs. Vesey, to the confusion I felt from your very obliging reproaches, that my Letter was sent before I received them, and must have met your's on the road. Bad as my head now is, it shall not prevent my thanking you for your very kind remembrance of me, which I seemed, indeed I only seemed, so little to deserve.

There was not the least danger of my losing you in my walk from Canterbury, or any other walk. I may lose my watch or my purse, but the last treasure I am ever likely to lose by any carelessness

of

of my own is my friends. I think I am pretty secure against any such accident, by keeping them always within sight: and my imagination has such telescopic eyes, that they will easily reach you even in

"La divisa dal mondo ultima Irlanda."

I grieve to find that your departure is certainly fixed, and that you depart, alas! depressed by such miserable apprehensions of the loss of sight. God grant they may be merely the fictions of weak nerves, and I hope there is very good reason to believe them nothing more. Yet even this, without further consequence, is a state of suffering which I cannot think of without feeling it very deeply for you. But the tenderest concern, and the most ardent wishes of poor limited mortals for each other, are wretchedly helpless and unavailing: and the best proof of our affection, is the recommending those we love to that protection which alone is a security in every danger, and to that support and assistance which are equal to every distress.

I am rather scandalized that you should even ask how I like the *Malinconia d'Alcindo*, which is beautiful in the highest degree, and it is impossible to be unaffected by it without an absolute want of all taste and all feeling. The only part of it which is unsen-

unsentimental or unpoetical, is that which you have quoted, and which, consequently, you find some difficulty to understand. After this declaration, it is not for my credit, perhaps, to attempt to explain it. The literal translation is—Let laughter deafen vulgar theatres with idle wonders. *Il riso*, I suppose, means comedy and pantomime; and the *vile meraviglie* are evidently "the Dragon of Wantley" and "Harlequin hatched from an Egg." Seriously, I suppose C. Maggi's intention was in conformity to his subject, to exalt tragedy, and throw a contempt on comedy.

Why did you not send me a message, or a card, or a twisted note, to say you would carry me to Lady H—'s assembly and shew me Madame B——? I have too much English vanity not to be very impatient to know something about a lady who is so sensible to the merit of our writers. You have given me, to be sure, a personal motive of curiosity about her, by saying she looks as if she would like me. Pray tell me, my dear Mrs. Vesey, what kind of a look it is that implies this consequence, that I may learn to judge by people's faces, at first sight, whether they will like me or not. Adieu, do not wait till the last post bell before you write to me next.

LETTER II.

Deal, *June* 1, 1763.

TRAVEL as far as you please, my dear Mrs. Vesey, be assured that wherever you are, there will my affectionate thoughts and best wishes find a way to pursue you. It is painful to me, indeed, to reflect that you are at a distance, where this is the only method in which I can reach you. But such is the condition of unsettled life, formed by various situations to give a various exercise to our virtues, not to allow a perpetual indulgence to our inclinations. This is a privilege reserved for a world, where there will be no danger of their ever misleading us. Yet the heart will have its own feelings: and the absence of those we esteem and love will always give it pain. This pain, however, might be greatly alleviated, if distant friends would consider each other, however separated by place, yet united by the same general blessings, and the same general duties: equally children and servants of the same universal parent and sovereign: pursuing the same common interest, and by the different roads that are marked out to them, travelling under the same guidance, to the same common home:

home: each in the mean time endeavouring to secure a glad reception there, by diligent efforts of improving virtue: and mutually recommending each other in their several difficulties and dangers, to the same all-powerful support and protection.

Surely, my dear Mrs. Vesey, there can be no room for the melancholy doubt which you express, that a friendship established upon principles like these, (and no other deserves the name), should ever be dissolved. Leagues of guilt, connexions of selfish interest, and parties of merely idle amusement, must perish with the vices and follies on which they are founded. But attachments formed on the noblest principles and best affections of the soul, must be immortal as itself: and they who have improved, encouraged, and supported each other in the duties of a state of trial, will surely be permitted to rejoice together in the rewards of a world of perfect happiness. Remember, that Heaven is always represented as a society; and read 1 Thess. chap. iv. ver. 13—18; Hebrews, chap. xii. ver. 22—24: and when you have the Bible before you, read the Revelations. I do not mean to set you about explaining the Prophecies, but the parts that relate to the descriptions of a future life.

I cannot, for the life of me, get any intelligence from Mrs. Montagu, whether you are actually set out

out for Ireland or not. However, I venture to direct this to Dublin, as I am willing to write before we set out for Spa: and we are to rendezvous at Dover on Friday *.

You would have found an infallible method of conquering my strong aversion to a *concetto*, if it had been a means of conveying your picture to me. How could you be so inhuman to tantalize me, by the mention of it without the effect. I think you could not have been such a savage, if you were perfectly sensible of the value which I should have set on it.

I would break my telescope if it could not set you full in my view, even though the K. of P. *(Prussia)* was standing at my elbow. How you must laugh while you were writing that part of your Letter, in which you talk of my being acquainted with him. Even if I was not too obscure ever to fall under his notice, I am too little an idolater either of heroism or of genius to desire it. Humanity, indeed, would find no great charms in the contemplation of a *hero*, whose ambition has so long been sporting with the ruin of desolated provinces: and a higher principle would make one shudder at a *genius*, who has perverted very noble

* This was when Mrs. Carter went into Germany and Holland with Lord Bath and Mr. and Mrs. Montagu.

talents

talents to insult and defy the sovereign Benefactor from whom he received them. You certainly judge very right; that not all the blaze either of military or literary glory, could make me forget the author of *sans souci*.

I am very impatient to know whether you had a good voyage, and whether you are got home, and well enough to enjoy your romantic situation; and, above all, whether your eye is better?

I have been in a constant hurry ever since I left London, in trying to get my own apartment fitted up before I set out, which with much fatigue I have accomplished. My books are quietly ranged upon their shelves, in expectation of the time when I shall be enough settled to read them. My room is situated as pleasant as it can be in a town, or rather at the extremity of a town, for the house is the last in it. On one side I have a fine view of the country, and on the other of the sea. The front is covered with ivy, which my father would root up, but in compliance with his owl of a daughter, is so good as to suffer it to remain, for it would go to the heart of me to lose a leaf*.

* This house is now in the possession of the Editor. The ivy has been destroyed for many years, for he does not recollect to have ever seen it there. Its place is now but ill-supplied by vines.

Adieu,

Adieu, my dear Mrs. Vesey, every blessing attend you.

P. S. How came I to write so long a Letter? But you cannot punish me more effectually than by writing me a short one.

LETTER III.

Spa, *July* 26, 1763.

As Mrs. Montagu's Letter has given you so ample an account of us all, I will write more at leisure, and seize every five minutes, which this strange water-drinking life will allow me, to convince you that I think of you more than once in the day. Indeed if the amusements of confused and general conversation were capable of banishing you from my thoughts, I should very little deserve the privilege you so kindly allow me, of partaking your delightful retirement on the banks of the Liffy *. I am too happy in being admitted there sometimes

* At Lucan near Dublin, where Mrs. Vesey had a country-seat.

as

as a partner of your most interesting reflexions, and of being recollected with some degree of tender remembrance, not to start at the idea of being excluded when I appear in the fantastic French figure under which the wicked wit of Mrs. Montagu has painted me to your imagination. I comfort myself, however, that you are too good a critic not to discover that the picture is drawn from invention, and not from nature; and that you have too much charity not to believe that your unsophisticated friend has kept the same aching head and the same simple character through all varieties of soil and climate.

The strange perplexed system of Mr. B——* is not more absurd, than your observation upon it is reasonable and just. Into what labyrinths of error does the mind wander when it quits the plain path of simple truth to follow its own wild conjectures! Surely there is strange sophistry in the arguments he uses to support his plan. That both "we and animals are *punished* in this state without having been criminal," is in more respects than one a groundless assertion: it is true, that we often *suffer*, but there are many cases in which suffering ought

* The Editor does not know who is meant by Mr. B.——, unless it be Mr. Charles Blount, a deistical writer of some note, and a suicide, in the latter part of the 17th century.

no

no more to be considered as *punishment*, than disagreeable physic to be called poison: nor does it at all follow, because a strict regimen and some severe discipline are necessary to the soul, in its present infirm and sickly constitution, they should be continued in a state of renewed and eternal health.—The whole of your quotation from Mr. B—— is indeed miserably uncomfortable and gloomy. How much more worthy of infinite goodness, how much better adapted to the condition of man, and how consolatory to the humiliations of mortal weakness, is that system which proposes pardon to penitent guilt, and reward to defective goodness: which exacts no more from an erring and fallible nature than a sincere endeavour to rectify its disorders, and a constant progress towards the perfection which is reserved for it under happier circumstances of its being? Could a scheme like this, which had escaped all the good sense of Socrates, the vivid spirit of Plato, and the deep penetration of Aristotle, be the mere invention of a few unreasoning and unlettered fishermen! And is there any article of faith proposed in the Gospel, that contains a difficulty equal to such a supposition?

With regard to animals, they have no way of expressing their sensations, that can furnish us with a sufficient knowledge of their condition, to form any distinct reasoning on the subject. It may at

least be fairly asserted, that whenever the sum of pleasure exceeds that of pain, existence is a positive benefit, and there is not any objection to the supposition, that in the present instance this may be the case. After all, in this state of limited faculties and imperfect knowledge, it is equally our duty and our happiness to check that idle and vicious curiosity, which leads us to confound general and evident truths by endeavouring to account for particular difficulties, instead of satisfying ourselves under particular difficulties, by a reliance on general and evident truths. We certainly know that the sovereign Lord of all, is wise, and good, and just; and, consequently, that wisdom, goodness, and justice will, in the event of things, be the measure of his dispensations to all his creatures. A dependance on this eternal truth, amidst all the perplexities of present inexplicable appearances, is a noble exercise of our faith and our obedience.

" Sappiamo il fatto: un di supremo il come."

I do not think Dr. Limbourg would ever dream of putting such a conversation as this among *les amusements de Spa:* but you draw me into it, and it may do both of us more good perhaps than any I might relate to you from the walks of the Geronsterre;

ronsterre; or any that you could repeat to me from your dinner or supper parties.

You will be disappointed that I can see but little of this romantic country of which you are so fond: but a set of villains lurking about the woods renders it unsafe for me to walk alone; and I should lose all freedom of rambling and of thinking, with a guard. Mrs. Montagu and I walked this morning to the top of the hill, but not with perfect ease, for she was seized with a panic in the midst of the wood, which made us walk ourselves out of breath to get within view of the town.

Lady Westmorland and Lady Primrose are arrived here, and I have the pleasure of informing you that Lady Primrose looks remarkably well. There is not at present a lodging empty in Spa. I believe there are more English than any other nation; and much fewer French, which you know I am not likely to regret. Of all the foreigners the Germans are my favourites. I believe I like the general character, and I am very sure I am charmed with one particular specimen in a Lady* with whom I have been so happy as to form an acquaintance, and who appears to me, both *à l'egard de l'esprit et du cœur*, one of the most amiable and agreeable characters I ever knew. I long to have

* Madam de Blum.

you

you know her, for you are worthy of it, and I am sure would love and honour her with all your heart.

I rejoice to find that your eye is, upon the whole, not worse; but I grieve to find your spirits not better. My head is much in the same state in which you have always known it, and seems neither the better nor the worse for the waters, nor are my little idle fevers encreased; so I continue to drink them, though my nerves are more affected and my spirits more flat than they have been for a long while. You may see by Mrs. Montagu's Letter that this is by no means her case, for she is surprisingly altered for the better, and has recovered all her vivacity. Lord Bath is extremely well, and in good spirits. Adieu, my dear Mrs. Vesey, may happier visions than those which haunted the bower of Malvina tranquilize and enliven your's.

LETTER IV.

Deal, *Oct.* 30, 1763.

By your expectation of hearing from me, I apprehend that you did not receive a Letter which

I wrote to you from the Hague. If you did not, I am doubly obliged to you, for giving me the pleasure of a Letter from you. Yet the joy which I always feel on every proof of your remembrance, was deadened by the melancholy account which you give me of your friends, and the reflection on the pain which a heart like your's must feel on such an occasion. I perfectly well remember the young Lady that was with you last winter, and grieve for your loss of her. Yet that strong sensibility which you mention, though the indication of an amiable disposition, is such a capacity of exquisite suffering, that her early removal from a world like this may, to herself and to those who best loved her, be a distinguished mercy.

The storms which have produced such sad effects in other places, have been but very little felt on our coast. Indeed I believe that you guess right, that a taste for the sublime would be very apt to lead me to the fullest view of a tempest, though I could not stand the shock of seeing any one suffer by it, but should quit my station; as you, who are just as sublime and just as silly as I am, would do in the like case. But I retract this last epithet: for though the consideration which you mention certainly ought to have its weight, yet the person who could survey the horrors of a storm with little other sentiment than a cool reflection on its general advantages,

tages, would be very little the better for such a contemplation. Universal and remote consequences would operate very faintly on our reason, if the heart was not by infinite wisdom formed to feel the private and immediate stroke. By this it is awed and softened to such a sense of human weakness and dependance, as leads the mind into a state the most friendly to our virtue. Reason, on which we are so apt to build our foolish pride, would perpetually slumber over the task of life, if it was not awakened to the charge by the voice of the affections. Upon this principle I cannot help thinking that a cloyster is by no means such a school of devotion as it is represented; and every observation I made abroad served to confirm my opinion. I am persuaded that the vicissitudes of the world much more naturally carry the thoughts to a sense of our dependance upon the divine protection, than that dead vacation from all present hopes and fears that stupifies the retirement of a convent.

Do you ever take me along with you, my dear Mrs. Vesey, in your solitary rambles? It is but fair you should, considering how often you share in mine. I hope your eyes will be strengthened by the repose which you so very rightly give them, and will furnish you with amusement, when the weather is too bad to admit of your walking. Walk, how-

ever, as often as you can, for I am persuaded it will be of service to your health and spirits.

I know not to what article in the papers you allude about Voltaire, but I suppose by what you say he is expected in England. *Tant pis*, I am sorry for it. As to your dispute, are you not well enough acquainted with me to give it, in your thoughts at least, an immediate decision? If I happened to be accidentally in a room with Voltaire, I do not believe I should think it necessary to run out screaming fire and murder; but certainly from every society in which I had a casting vote, such a wretch would be infallibly excluded*; and excluded particularly for the very circumstance for which he would claim to be admired, his being a *genius*. I must confess, that to me the idolatry of great talents applied to wicked purposes, is still worse than the idolatry of titles and riches, as their influence is more universally destructive.

Do not think me too severe, my dear Mrs. Vesey; for particular faults I believe few people have more indulgence; I feel how much I need it

* Mrs. Carter used to relate an anecdote of her friend Dr. Johnson with particular pleasure. When Abbé Raynal was in England, a lady of fashion invited Dr. Johnson to meet him at her house: "Madam," replied he, "I have read his book and have nothing to say to him."

for

for myself: but atrocious principles ought to be treated with the utmost detestation.—A wicked writer is a much worse character than even a wicked man. The temporary example of the last may murder a few individuals, but the other poisons a river, and diffuses infection through whole kingdoms; the current of time rolls it to successive generations, and there can be no guessing when the force of the venom will be spent. The present fashionable system of French philosophy, the wisdom of the *encyclopedistes*, subverts all the foundations of morality, breaks all connexion between earth and heaven, and tries to cheat mankind out of all that is worth living for, and all that is worth dying for. Can any talents of understanding, any treasures of learning, or any brilliancy of wit, reconcile one to the conversation of a person engaged in a scheme to thwart every dispensation of Heaven for human happiness! I am sure you find much more satisfaction in talking with your rustic dialist, than you could from the polished expositor of Newton.

Che de sublime chiaro ingegno adorno
Tutt' altro seppe che se stesso e dio.

You ask me if I am reconciled to the sea. It is strange if being very sick should produce that effect.

Yet

Yet I believe I should very easily get over the short inconvenience of the *trajet* from Dover to Calais, if I had no other objection to travelling. But indeed the state of my health was so very languid while I was abroad, that every exertion was more than I well knew how to support. My head is as bad as ever since my return, but it is less difficult to bear, as I can indulge it at present in perfect quiet. I am now going to lay it on a pillow for the remainder of the day, but I would not omit writing this post, as you desired to hear from me. Adieu, &c.

P. S. What have I done to you, and what has poor Deal done to you, that in your direction you stick us in the mire of Sussex, when we are in reality so happy as to be placed on the coast of Kent?

LETTER V.

Deal, *Dec.* 6, 1763.

I KNOW not how to refuse what you so kindly urge, and therefore will send you such an account as I can of my head. Though such repeated

peated proofs of the inefficacy of all remedies, renders me very reluctant to any consultation about a case which I am persuaded is beyond the reach of medicine, yet as I by no means think that pain and languor are to be endured for their own sake, when there is any probable means of their removal; I have made every reasonable trial to get free from them. As every external remedy has failed, my mind has been long accustomed to submit quietly and chearfully to that condition of health which seems to be inseparably connected with the principles of my constitution*. Indeed it would be inexcusable if I was impatient under an evil so very slight compared with what every human creature has a capacity of suffering. On the contrary, I ought to be very thankful in feeling no worse pain than the confinement to a pillow can relieve. It used to appear one of the least tolerable circumstances of my state of health, that it renders me idle and useless, and is so strong a check to many improvements which I should naturally wish to acquire. But I have long been convinced that it

* This account of Mrs. Carter's head-achs would not have been inserted, but in order to introduce the admirable reflections which succeed it; reflections, which in every illness and every fit of impatience arising from it, all Christians may recall to their minds with advantage and improvement.

is

is just as necessary to make one's self easy under the want of intellectual attainments, where one is restrained in the means of acquiring them, as under the want of riches and honours. With regard to any degree of usefulness in the world, we have nothing further to do than to make the best of those circumstances in which He, who best knows what is the best situation for our virtue and our happiness, has placed us. It is our own fault if every situation does not contribute to our real improvement. The faculties of mind or body which are too weak to admit of strong active exertions, are sufficient for the exercise of the passive duties; and these are usually better adapted to our nature than our pride is willing to allow. I have writ a great deal upon the subject of this worthless head of mine, but I hope it may have the effect of making you as easy about it as I am: though I very sensibly feel the kind concern you are so good as to express about it.

Leave your Italian books to somebody else who loves you moderately enough to be the better for them. Yet, though I renounce your legacy, I am happy in any instance of my being in your thoughts. I should have felt very uncomfortable not to have been upon equal terms with you in this particular instance. But I remembered my promise of leaving

leaving you the *best* book* in my collection, and before I went abroad I sat down and put it into execution.

I have the pleasure of hearing from Mrs. Montagu that she continues to feel the good effects of the Spa water. I was afraid that the northern air would have petrified all its influence. I must not flatter myself with the expectation of seeing you in London this winter; for I am sure if there was any probability of it, you would not have omitted to mention what you know would give me so high a degree of pleasure.—Adieu: my head aches and my hand trembles, and I am as good for nothing as heart can wish. I have no manner of dependance upon your physician: but a Letter from you is a prescription that you may be assured will always do me good.

* Meaning, no doubt, some copy of the Bible which she particularly valued; but Mrs. Vesey died many years before her.

LETTER

LETTER VI.

Clarges Street, *Jan.* 21, 1764.

Your Letter, my dear Mrs. Vesey, found me at Canterbury, where I spent a few days in the constant hurry of attempting more than I had either time or health to execute. I next proceeded to Lambeth, where I lived more quietly. Besides the happiness which I always find in the conversation in that palace, my romantic genius was this time extremely gratified by the situation of my abode. As the more modern rooms, where I used to be placed, were occupied before my arrival, I was lodged in one of the towers, separated from the rest of the house by the chapel and by other venerable buildings; and through these I used to pass every night, under Gothic arches dimly lighted by pale lamps, with all the winds of heaven whistling round me, followed by the echo of my own steps, and the deep hollow sound of the closing doors. In such a situation you may imagine I felt in great force the sublime of the storm on the thirteenth.

I came to town on Monday last, and this is the first hour that I have been able to sit down quietly to write, though there are very few in which I have not

not thought on you, and regretted the loss of that happiness which I enjoyed last winter, and of which, alas! you give me no hope for this. You see by this, that I am very little qualified for giving such stoical lessons as you suppose, which I am so ill formed, and indeed so little desirous to practise myself.

It seems, no doubt, at first view, something unconscionable, that surrounded by so many other friends, whom I with so much reason esteem and love, I should still sigh for the absence of one. But indeed, if I had ten thousand, the peculiarity which belongs to every individual character would make them all preserve their separate and distinct interest in my heart. I often consider this circumstance as wisely and graciously ordered for our good. If we found that one object of affection could always be replaced by another, the world would hold us in everlasting chains: we should be apt to forget that it is merely a passage; and our thoughts would feel little attraction to that general home, where after all the interruptions of a varying life, every virtuous union shall be completed, and we shall meet our assembled friends of every class, without the danger of future separation. Neither you nor I have any reason to regret the impossibility of acquiring the stoic perfection of annihilating

annihilating our sensibilities *, while we may be the disciples of that divine philosophy which sanctifies and applies them to the noblest purposes, by teaching us to make them an instrument of quickening and encouraging our diligence in the discharge of every duty.

I am sometimes afraid, my dear Mrs. Vesey, that you are weary of the seriousness of my Letters; but how shall I help it? To you I cannot write without thinking, and I cannot think without being serious.

You will be pleased to hear that Mrs. J. Pitt † did me the honour to call here twice before I came to town. I waited on her the day after my arrival. I am sensible of the advantage of such an ac-

* However it was not so much the passions themselves that the Stoics endeavoured to suppress, as it was the outward expression of them. They perceived that they led to evil, and knew not how to convert them to good. The great difference, therefore, between their philosophy and that of the Gospel is, that the latter does not attempt to check the passions, but to turn them to proper objects, and a good purpose; so that while they lead us to perform our duty, they may also reward us in the execution of it.

† Wife, now widow, of John Pitt, Esq. of Arlington Street. That acquaintance soon ripened into friendship, which continued with very frequent and affectionate intercourse to the close of Mrs. Carter's life.

quaintance,

quaintance, from my opinion of her own merit: but I have a very particular degree of pleasure from the circumstance of being indebted for it to you.

Mrs. Montagu looks remarkably well, and I hope the Spa water will prove more than a temporary relief to her. Lord Bath too is extremely well, and in good spirits. Lord Lyttelton has a slight feverishness, which I hope will prove of no consequence. He has long been in better health than usual. I hope you will make me all the amends you can for being out of the reach of my notes, by writing me as many Letters as you think the person deserves, who in all places and in all societies is equally impatient to receive them.

P. S. You bid me be acquainted with Mrs. Dunbar, I was too much struck and charmed both by her own manner and your character of her, not to wish it from almost the first time I met her; but I then saw no chance of my enjoying that happiness: however I have since met her at Lady Primrose's, and she has done me the favour of calling on me. I have returned the visit, and here the matter rests: but here it will not rest *, if she is but

* Here it did not rest, for a long and uninterrupted intimacy (till Mrs. Carter's death) followed, attended by the most affectionate and sincere regard and esteem on both sides. This lady,

but half as much pleased with me as I am with her, but indeed I am afraid this is by no means the case.

LETTER VII.

Deal, *June* 9, 1764.

For some weeks past I have been alternately quarrelling with you, my dear Mrs. Vesey, for not writing to me because you were idle, and frighting myself by an apprehension that you were sick. Your Letter, which I have since received, too well proves that my fears were not without foundation. How is it possible you could do so rash an action, as to live for a fortnight in a damp house! I tremble to think what might have been the consequence of such a hazard, as much as I grieve to find what has been the consequence. I hope you will soon be able to give me the pleasure of knowing that this addition to your nervous disorders is perfectly removed, and that you are at

lady, then wife to Major Dunbar, is sister to Mrs. John Pitt, and is now widow of Joshua Iremonger, Esq. of Portman Square, and of Wherwell, Hants.

least

least as well as nervous people must ever expect to be.

As I always read your Letters *con amore*, I always read them with ease: so I beg you would bestow all the time necessary to make them more legible, in making them longer. The new act makes no alteration in any Letters inclosed to members of parliament. It only cramps people who have not the assurance to beg franks with a full direction *; which being my case, I am obliged to make you pay for putting out your eyes with this vile little crowded hand.

Next to the happiness of conversing with you by the side of your river, is that of knowing you wished me there. If thoughts were possessed of shape and colour as well as wings, how often would you find me near you!

I have heard nothing of the Irish stuff, for which I am obliged to you; but notwithstanding your unfavourable report of it, I am determined to think it the prettiest I ever saw.

* For before that time it was sufficient for a member of parliament, without writing the whole direction, to sign it with his name, and *free*. But some advantage having been taken of the signature after erasing the word *free*, and at the same time to check the too great frequency of giving franks, this act was made, by which the whole direction must be written by the member.

Mrs. Montagu is at Sandleford very well, and enjoying the country *en solitaire*. Lord Bath very joyous at the head of a crowd in Shropshire; and I going on mighty quietly with an aching head at Deal. Do pray give me some encouragement to hope that I may meet you in town next winter. Adieu, you bid me write to you very soon, and as little as I love writing in general, I always obey you. I leave the inference to your own conscience.

LETTER VIII.

Ealing, *July* 12, 1764.

I VERY sensibly feel the kindness of your relieving me as soon as possible from the anxiety I was in about your health; and I should not deserve it, if I did not take the very first opportunity in my power of writing, at a time when I believe you must be particularly solicitous to receive some account of your friends in England. You will, I am sure, take a very sincere share in our concern for the loss of my Lord Bath, and be anxious about Mrs. Montagu, whom it must so very deeply affect.

As

As soon as I found by her Letters that there was very little hope remaining, I came to London in hopes of being of some little consolation to her, especially as almost all her other friends were out of town. I got to her on Friday, and on Saturday night all hope of poor Lord Bath was over. The tumult of hopes and fears during some days of his illness had hurt her health and agitated her spirits to a great degree. On Sunday morning we came to Ealing, and I thank God she is now much better, though alas! she must long feel the want of a friend to whom she was so sincerely attached, and with whom she so constantly conversed, that almost every hour must remind her of his absence. My great attention to her, in some degree, withdraws my thoughts from myself: yet I very sensibly feel my own share in this melancholy event, for most truly did I love him. The immediate cause of his death is supposed to have been a cold, taken by sitting in Lord Besborough's garden. It is an aggravation of his removal, that it did not seem to arise from any natural decay.—But all is in the hand of Providence, and our reflections on such kind of circumstances are idle and unreasonable. One thing is clear, that all who loved him ought to be thankful that he did not outlive himself. He left the world in possession of every comfort it had

to bestow: with faculties unimpaired and temper unruffled; and after a long enjoyment of the repose and dignity of age, unaccompanied by the pains and the weaknesses which often render the close of life so burthensome to the owners, so tedious to their attendants, and so pitiable to their friends.

We have this house entirely to ourselves, and live almost continually in the air, which is of great service to Mrs. Montagu's spirits. I believe we shall return to town next week, and soon after that go to Sandleford, where I propose to stay till I find my friend has tolerably recovered the capacity of application to her usual employments and amusements; and then I design to return to Deal for the remainder of the year. Nothing, I hope, will prevent my coming to town early in January. I feel that the hope of meeting you there, lies too near my heart for me to be able to give it up, though you do not give me half the encouragement to indulge it which I could have wished. You say that if you stay the winter at Lucan you shall have time enough to think. If I believed it impossible for you to think any where else, heaven forbid I should so far prefer my own gratification to your happiness as to wish you here! But you must think in all situations; and no important subject can be merely local to a mind like your's; and I will

please myself with the hope that we shall think together in London.

Our dear Mrs. Montagu desires to be kindly remembered to you. She will write as soon as her spirits are sufficiently composed; at present writing would be very hurtful to her. Adieu. I have written this Letter *à diverses reprises*, as I never leave Mrs. M—— but for a very short time. Your Letter deserves a better answer than I am at present capable of making it.

LETTER IX.

Deal, *Sept.* 29, 1764.

And so, my dear Mrs. Vesey, after making me wait so many weeks in expectation of hearing from you, you really think me so very silly, that it can be but a few days before you hear from me!—And for that matter you think very rightly, for just so silly am I. Among many other motives which generally lead me to answer your Letters in as great a hurry as if it was upon a business of life and death, I am impatient to thank you for that enchanting pleasure I received from that exquisite picture which you were so good as to send

me of your romantic adventure*. I owe you and Mrs. Hancock a thousand thanks for wishing me to partake it with you. This, indeed, is the only circumstance wanting to complete my entertainment, for I think it is scarcely possible that I could have been more struck by the reality of the scenes which you describe, than by your description of them. If you had met your poor penitent in a popish church, where no inexorable reformers had demolished the playthings of superstition, a mind like your's would not have felt so strong an impulse to join with him in prayer, as in a scene so much better adapted to the temper of true devotion. The sublime views of wild uncultivated nature, the silence of a desart, and the melancholy repose of a ruin, strike the imagination with awful and affecting ideas. In such a situation the soul expands itself, and feels at once the greatness of its capacities, and the littleness of its pursuits; that mysterious contradiction which points its views to future

* Mrs. Vesey's Letters had probably been all returned to her own family, for none of them were found among Mrs. Carter's papers.—They were remarkably beautiful, for she had a peculiar talent in describing scenery and events, in language in the highest degree glowing, picturesque, and unaffected. The Editor has read many of them, both to Mrs. Montagu and Mrs. Carter, and it is much to be lamented that they are withheld from the Public.

being

being, and fixes its dependance on infinite goodness and almighty power: and thus the thoughts are at once elevated by hope, and the heart is awed and softened to humility.

You ask me news of our dear Mrs. Montagu, but why do you not enquire of herself? A Letter from you, I am sure, would always do her good. I thank God she was tolerably well when I left her, and she continues to give me good accounts of her health. Soon after I wrote to you last we went to Sandleford, and for most part of the time we were entirely alone, which I believe from the state of her spirits was best for her, and upon all accounts best for me. Our friend, you know, has talents which must distinguish her in the largest circles; but there it is impossible for one fully to discover either the beauties of her character, or the extent and variety of her understanding, which always improves on a more accurate examination, and on a nearer view. Such a composition, I believe, would be very delightful, merely as an object of cool speculation, but the charm is inexpressibly heightened when it is complicated with the affections of the heart *. When the

* Nothing can be more just, or more strictly correct than this character of Mrs. Montagu. They who saw her only in a crowd, or in companies where she was the object of general attention, and too often wished to be that of general admiration,

the weather was good we spent much of our time in the garden, or in the post-chaise. Sandleford owes the least to art and the most to nature of almost any place I ever saw. The prospect from the garden is soft and elegant, and riant to the highest degree, and has such a singular air of liberty as renders it very peculiarly pleasing. Indeed the whole country, though it has little of the sublime, has the most of the beautiful that can be imagined, and consequently the kind of situation in which one would most wish to reside. Great and sublime views afford a noble and striking entertainment, and are at proper intervals very useful to elevate the mind beyond the pitch of ordinary life: but the cultivated and good-humoured and familiar scenes of nature, are best suited to the general state, and to the purposes of social duty.

I have ransacked in vain every corner of your Letter, in hopes of finding some mention of your coming to England. I had flattered myself that you would have recompensed me for your long silence by this intelligence, but I now begin to lose all hope for this winter; and it is looking too far

tion, (an object which she seldom failed to attain), did not know her.—They witnessed, indeed, the brilliancy of her talents, but were ignorant of the real charms of her understanding, the strength of her mind, and the goodness of her heart.

into

into futurity to form any schemes about the next. If you can revive my expectation, I think you will not omit giving me the earliest encouragement in your power. As you are so very moderate to desire only a little of my love for you, I think it right to make you the compliment of asking your advice how I shall dispose of the rest.

If you did not, like Sir Charles Easy in the play, put snuff in my Letters instead of reading them, you would have known that I had received the gown from Mr. Burke, and that I thought it the prettiest I ever saw. As I am persuaded that I look younger, and handsomer, and more good-humoured in that than in any other, only think what an object you will lose, if you do not see me while it is in its perfection. Moreover, it is very necessary for you to come, that you may confute the malice of Mrs. Howe *, in doubting my being acquainted with you; of which she may have ocular demonstration, as she has taken a house directly fronting my walk from Clarges Street to Bolton Row.

* The Honourable Mrs. Howe, now of Grafton Street, a much esteemed friend of Mrs. Carter, sister to Lord Howe, and widow of John Howe, Esq.

LETTER X.

Deal, *Dec.* 4, 1764.

At a time when I was endeavouring to reconcile myself to your not coming to England, only think how lively a transport of pleasure I felt in the revival of my hopes by your Letter last night. I had but a few days before had an account that there were no hopes of your coming.—I felt the disappointment the more strongly, as so far as any thing can de depended on, I hope certainly to be in town this year.

It grieves me to find that your health is not good; but I flatter myself that change of air, and even the inconvenience of a sea voyage may be of use to it. You will find too, I hope, some remedy, and one of a very pleasant kind, in the sight of friends who so sincerely love, and so earnestly long to see you. With regard to myself, who am so truly of that number, I am immoderately scandalized at your objection to the date of our acquaintance. One would imagine you were addressing yourself to a mere visitor, whom you had met for twenty years together twice in a winter in a formal circle; instead of the person who for several months had the happiness of conversing with you almost every

every day. Ideas are no more to be measured by length of time, than population by extent of country. And which do you think contains most inhabitants, the boundless track of Tartarian desarts, or the limited space of a crowded metropolis?

The description of your walking equipage so exactly resembles my own, that it did me a world of good. Mine, however, does not at present appear in the face of the sun, as I generally take my morning walk of a mile before it is light. Indeed the weather is sometimes so bad when I set out, that it is prudent not to expose myself to the censure of being out of my wits. I derive, however, two advantages from exposing myself to all the varieties of the elements, that I hardly ever take cold, and am always in tolerable good-humour with the weather; which, considering how many people pass half their lives in grumbling at a bad day*, is no trifling point. When the weather is fine my twilight walks are particularly delightful. I hear the owl sing his farewell note to the departing shadows of night, and enjoy a most enlivening spectacle in the gradual illumination of every object by the rising day.

* See this querulous temper well excused in one of Johnson's Idlers.

I write

I write in a great hurry, but would not omit thanking you for a Letter, from which I received so much pleasure. My best wishes, my more than *wishes*, attend you in your voyage. I shall listen to every breath of wind with a painful anxiety till you are landed. Adieu;—may we and the rest of our friends meet in health and spirits, and with nothing to alloy the pleasure we hope from each other.

LETTER XI.

Deal, *Jan.* 2, 1765.

A THOUSAND thanks to you for so kindly giving me the pleasure of hearing from you before I set out for this place.—Not that it was at all necessary for that reason which you wickedly insinuate, without believing it. My mind is not so totally enslaved to external objects, but that I can think of my absent friends in a crowded circle, as well as in a solitary walk: and my affection for you is just the same when

"Alps rise between us and whole oceans roll,"

as when I was so happy to live within a few doors of you. The difference of this circumstance, alas! will remind me of you too often in every day, with a feeling which I do not experience in this place, where I never expect to find you but in idea.

Do not disturb yourself by an opinion that I am deceived in you, and that you have undesignedly been playing off a false character. I may, perhaps, in some degree be partial to you, as no doubt I am to myself: but be assured, for your comfort, that I am not so partial to either, as not to see very clearly that we have both our faults, and that it is high time to set about a reformation of them. I am apt to think that your ideas of wisdom and virtue soar much higher than mine, which do not rise beyond the pitch of mortal probabilities. That, which I supposed you to have acquired in the shades of Lucan, was no more than the wisdom that helps us to discover our faults, and the virtue which repents and takes measures for amendment. And is this the supposition of which you declare yourself unworthy? Heaven forbid! I did not expect you to come forth from your retirement perfectly well qualified to frighten all the fine circles of Dublin out of their wits, by philosophical declamations on impeccable excellence; but I could not help pleasing myself with the persuasion, that a mind

mind so delicate as yours, when left to its own sensibilities, would naturally attend to the lessons which solitude is so fitted to inspire; at least when the current of the thoughts is not ruffled by any outrageous passion, nor the heart by any dark principles rendered impenetrable to the whispers of instruction. If *you* have either outrageous passions or dark principles, I will allow myself to be as much mistaken in your character as you seem to apprehend me to be.

May the new year, and many succeeding ones, bring you every happiness of this life, and every qualification for a better! You always have my affectionate good wishes: and the reflections which belong to this season will necessarily render them particularly earnest on a subject of the most awful importance. You say you are as well satisfied as "a mind formed for doubt can be." Pardon me, my dear Mrs. Vesey, our doubts are our own making, and perhaps there never was a mind naturally formed for doubting. The regulation of our understanding is a moral quality, and as much under the power of the will, as the regulation of one's outward actions. The misfortune is, that instead of resting contented with that necessary degree of clear information which is allotted to our present limited faculties, we are apt to think too much

much for our strength; and this effort must always terminate in the perplexities of error, and the hesitations of doubt. I have not time at present to pursue this subject, and besides I am always afraid of tiring you.

I think you will not be so inhuman as to let me remain very long in the suspense in which you left me at the conclusion of your Letter about Mr. Vesey's election, and its effect on your future destination. I hope your good-natured design proved successful to the person whose interest you seemed solicious to promote.

I am to set out for Canterbury on Saturday, and for Lambeth on the Monday following. I hope to be settled in Clarges Street on the 13th —where I shall regret your absence every day. It will depend upon yourself how often I tell you so. You have altered your direction, and consequently annihilated my franks.—Do pray send me some more.

LETTER XII.

Deal, *May* 21, 1765.

If I had writ to you as often as you have been in my thoughts, the cabinet in your dressing-room could not have contained the rubbish with which my Letters would have filled it. But though I have been always at leisure to think, it has been difficult for me to find a time to write, as I am yet unsettled and liable to frequent interruptions. This week, I think, will finish all my extraordinary avocations, and then I hope to be left to the solitary enjoyments of my own little quiet apartment, and my books, and the conversation of my absent friends.

I long to know how you do, and in what manner your schemes for the summer are fixed. Will you forgive the selfish principle which makes me still more solicitous about your schemes for the winter? This is a foolish anticipation, and, perhaps, I ought not to hope to see you so soon again! But it is one part of our task to correct that unreasonable extravagance of heart, which is so apt to transport our wishes to particular objects which are inconsistent with the general condition of a varying life. Whatever be the destination of the next winter, I shall always

always be happy in the recollection of the last. I owe you a thousand thanks for kindly indulging me in so many opportunities of conversing with you. If an increase of esteem and affection can repay you this obligation, most amply are you repaid.

I hope you found all the pleasure you expected from your party on Friday with Mr. Gray*, and that your passion for him continues in full force; to which I give my free consent, notwithstanding your being so very clear that he was made on purpose for me. It might be unlucky for us if either he or I, singly, were of the same opinion; and so, perhaps, it is better that I resisted the temptation which you endeavoured to throw in my way. I am glad I did resist that, and many other temptations to a longer stay in town, for it was proper for me to return home; and while I was haunted by that thought, any pleasure I could have felt must have been imperfect. It was impossible for me to quit the society of the friends whom, with so much reason, I so highly esteem and love, without some pain: but instead of regretting what I have left behind, it is now my business to enjoy with cheerfulness and gratitude the blessings of my present situation. I shall have great reason to be

* The poet.

thankful

thankful if I feel no worse evil than the langour which weak nerves must sometimes necessarily experience from any continuance of a uniform life. But this may be enlivened by looking forward to the return of the social months of winter. To secure one's hope against all events, it would be wise to extend the prospect beyond the confines of disappointment and of change, and anticipate the happiness of meeting one's friends in that universal sejour, where separation will be no more, nor the enjoyment of the society of those who are at present interrupted by anxieties for the absent.

Let me know how you do, and when you are to go, and whither. I find Mrs. Montagu has not fixed on the time of her departure. I hope before she goes this wretched east wind will be changed, which annihilates all " vernal delight and joy," and the zephyrs attend her at Sandleford.

LETTER XIII.

Deal, *July* 31, 1765.

No, I was not angry, my dear Mrs. Vesey, but I was grieved at having only two notes and a card from you in very near three months. I am heartily sorry that ill health and low spirits contributed their share in depriving me of the pleasure I always feel in receiving a Letter from you. The plea of ill health must be admitted; but what is better for low spirits than conversing with a friend?

A thousand thanks to you for making me happy, by an account of the renewal of the lease in Bolton Row. You certainly could have little reason to apprehend any censure from me for your solicitude in a point about which I have been so solicitous myself. There is indeed no absolute dependance on the enjoyment of this favourite scheme either for you or me: yet surely there can be no harm in the indulgence of an innocent hope. I can see no reason why people who are not agitated by the turbulence of boisterous passions, should stagnate into a dead calm. On the contrary, I think one should thankfully cherish every hope which serves only to give spirit to tranquillity, and variety to

the uniform tenour of regular life. Though the hopes which are founded on kind and virtuous affections are liable to the accidents of a varying world, they may be considered as only suspended, and not disappointed: the mind may still look forward to their complete accomplishment, in a state where accident and change are no more.

I found all the consolation arising from the prospect of such a state necessary to raise my spirits the other day, after hearing a long description of a person reduced by old age to such a loss of all her faculties, that the soul seemed to have no other office left but merely to keep the body above ground. The sudden fall of youth and health and strength, is a striking memento of the shortness of life, yet its effect soon wears off: but the infirmities of dotage are often a long continued lesson of the vanity of hopes, which extend no farther than a duration which, however short, may still be longer than any of the powers of enjoying it. It comforts one to consider any such instance rather as a useful example to the world, than a state of actual suffering to the object. We are apt indeed to shudder at the thought of arriving to the same deplorable state, but we feel it by a sense which would probably be lost whenever the case became our own. In such circumstances, perhaps, the soul may be affected in pretty much the same manner,

as

as it often is in its healthiest state by a confused dream. This short interval of intellectual slumber is of little consequence to a being, who is to awake from it into uninterrupted activity and eternal day *.

I am much obliged to you for the very kind anxiety you seem to be under for fear I should not be sufficiently attentive to my own interest. I am sure you would not think I really consulted it, if I was unnecessarily guilty of an act of wretched selfishness. I can have no motive at present which would justify me to my own mind in purchasing an annuity: and, I thank God, there is no great reason for me to apprehend that it ever will be absolutely necessary. However I do not perplex myself with thinking on future schemes of action, but will regulate my measures as circumstances arise, without forming any resolutions: only your friendly concern for me may be satisfied by an as-

* It is a curious and affecting circumstance, that the amiable lady to whom these observations were addressed, became herself an instance of the melancholy infirmity described in them. The powers of her understanding failed some time before her death, and from that state of mental imbecillity she never recovered. But while Mrs. Carter was in town she never omitted to visit her every day, though she never had the satisfaction of knowing whether her once affectionate and still beloved friend, was sensible of her presence or not.

surance that I will take all reasonable and proper care of myself: and I hope I shall not be tempted to do any more; for it is there that the great danger usually lies.

I can easily believe the tranquillizing effect of Malvina's bower, of which you draw so charming a picture, upon a mind gentle and elegant as your own: but I am by no means clear that it would have had any influence in checking the cruelties of an ambitious usurper, or the intrigues of a crafty politician. Remember that Sylla cut down the groves of Academus, to supply him with materials for the siege of Athens. The beauties of nature and of art have little effect on the mind that is destitute of virtue: and wicked and inhuman passions deal destruction to every thing which stands in their way.

I hope soon to hear that you are the better for this long continuance of delightful summer weather. I long also to hear that all is signed and sealed relating to the house. Do pray tell Mr. Vesey that I love him dearly. Adieu;—every happiness attend you.

The pistachio nuts which you gave me, and bid me set, pretty creatures, are come up.

LETTER XIV.

Deal, *Aug.* 26, 1765.

INDEED, my dear Mrs. Vesey, if you did in reality, and not merely in a dream, write me three Letters, I have been most wrongfully defrauded of one of them; which is the more vexatious, because though a Letter of your's will be a prize to whoever has purloined it, I will venture to affirm that it cannot be so valuable a treasure to any one as it would have been to myself.

I hope that by this time your heart is perfectly at ease about Lady Primrose, and leaves you quite at leisure to amuse yourself with those enchanting scenes with which your imagination is always filled when your mind is at ease.

As I was watering my myrtles and geraniums the other day, in a little court before the house, I was accosted by a beggar. I immediately asked her from what part of Ireland she came. The woman stared and looked excessively astonished at the question, but answered, "a few miles from Dublin." I then asked her if she knew Lucan; and on finding she did, I proceeded to enquire who lived there; she said *Squire Vesey*, and then broke forth into such a torrent of encomiums on the said 'Squire Vesey and

and his lady, and another very good lady who lived with them *(Mrs. Handcock)*, as rejoiced me exceedingly. The woman reiterated her praises, and I my copper, till at length she petitioned for a shift. It was very lucky that there happened to be one in my drawer, or out of pure love to 'Squire Vesey and his lady, there would have been some danger of my parting with that on my back. She said her name was Carey, or Young; affirmed she had lived in exceeding good credit, and kept an alehouse, by name, my Lord Kildare's Head. I hope this shiftless friend of mine was not the very thief that stole your Tasso, and repaid you in panegyric.

I hope part of the languor which you feel may be occasioned by the excessive heat of this summer. You reproach me for saying nothing about my head: but why should I, as I could tell you nothing that would give you pleasure? Indeed it has been very bad ever since I left London; but my spirits are good, and I bear the mortificatien of an idle insignificant manner of passing my time as well as I can.

LETTER XV.

Deal, *Dec.* 6, 1765.

I HAVE too much of your rural enthusiasm in my composition, my dear Mrs. Vesey, and too nearly resemble you in your hermit state, to have any pretensions for condemning you as *pastoral-mad.* Indeed I am so far from thinking it necessary to check my imagination in this respect, that I give it free scope, and gladly pursue every innocent extravagance to which it directs me. There is nothing which so effectually inspirits the languor and varies the uniformity of regular unbustling life. I heartily pity the people, however wise, who are destitute of the pleasures which arise from a vivid imagination; for nothing surely is so dull as uncoloured sense! Among all the faculties which different philosophers have chosen for their definition of men, I do not recollect ever to have seen imagination assigned for the characteristic of our species; and yet perhaps there is nothing which so indisputably distinguishes the human race from other animals as that power, which not confined by the appearances that offer themselves to the senses, nor by the deductions of the understanding, ranges through all the regions of possible existence:

existence: which sometimes gives to external objects a brighter colouring of joy, and a softer shade of melancholy, and by an inexplicable union connects them with the affections of the heart: at others, magnifies and varies them till they become too vast and too complex for the grasp of the mind, which then most sensibly feels the natural greatness of its aims, and the limits of its present capacity. You talked of my thinking you mad, and I wish you may not conclude me to be so from this strange rhapsody, into which I have been led I know not well how.

I wish you joy of Mr. Vesey's election, which I can do the more cordially, as he told me his being in parliament would not be an impediment to your coming to England as you used to do. You have kindly contrived to render the impossibility of your being in London this year less painful, by saying it is better for your health; though it is not easy for you to guess to what a degree I shall regret your absence. However I will look forward to another winter. Wiser people, I know, condemn this indulgence of distant prospects. But one suffers much less by the final disappointment of cheerful hopes, than by the perpetual dejection of uncertain fears. There can be no hurt in encouraging the pleasure one feels in any particular expectations, if the mind in its general disposition resigns

resigns its happiness to the care of Providence, and is fixed in its desire of acquiescence in every event.

I will pity you as much as you please for your removal from Lucan, where you must have led a most enviable life. But I suppose it is necessary or fit for you to go to Dublin, and one must get through this "work-a-day world" as well as one can. Indeed there are very few conditions in which a long course of solitary repose can be properly indulged; as there are hardly any in which, by intervals, it is not absolutely necessary to recollect the scattered powers of the mind, confute the false maxims of the world, and fortify the principles of duty. The almost constant effect which a long continued habit, either of society or solitude, has on every character, is a proof that their vicissitude is best adapted to our moral constitution. A perpetual intercourse of mixed society infallibly relaxes all the nerves of virtue; and a perseverance in the contrary extreme, gives an uncomplying hardness to the temper in indifferent things. I please myself in thinking what a quantity of wisdom and virtue you must have treasured up in your hermit state at Lucan, to fortify you against the temptations of Dublin.

You will not accompany me in my morning walks; yet indeed they are very delightful, and by

some

some means or other I contrive, whether you will or not, to drag you along with me. I rambled one morning this week to the top of a hill about a mile and half from the town, by moonlight; and there is no describing to you the charming tranquillity of the scene, or its effect on my own thoughts. I considered myself as enjoying an innocent and unenvied superiority over the slumbering world. I was not great, nor powerful, nor rich, but I felt great dignity in finding myself *awake*. I should have been inexcusably wicked if I had not felt great thankfulness too, in being awake to the enjoyment of unnumbered blessings, and cheerful speculations. After contemplating all the still beauties which the landskip received from the soft lustre of the moon, my walk home was enlivened by a view of all the spirit and glory of the opening day, and I had finished my walk just as the sun had darted its full splendour on the waves.

If you are as expeditious in writing as I have been, I may hope for the pleasure of hearing from you before I leave this place; if not, your Letter will find me in Clarges Street. I propose to set out from hence about the 4th of January, to spend a week at Lambeth, and to be in town ——alas, not within reach of my dear Mrs. Vesey, on the 13th.

LETTER XVI.

Clarges Street, *Jan.* 15, 1766.

You have always something new to offer, my dear Mrs. Vesey, but even if you had not, every line from you would make me happy, that conveyed a testimony of your kind remembrance of me. It is very true indeed that I seldom meet with so enchanting an entertainment as I always receive from your Letters, considered merely in themselves. Yet still the highest pleasure they give me is derived from my interest in the writer, and this would remain even if you should grow as dull as a post.—Not that I apprehend this is at all likely to be the case, even if you should live to be as old as your intimate friend the Countess of Desmond *. To be sure one reads in books, and hears in discourse, a great many wise positions, that imagination is the portion of youth: and many profound physical reasons are assigned for its decay as we advance in age. All this may in general be very true; yet I cannot help thinking that the change pro-

* A celebrated old lady who remembered dancing at a ball with Richard the Third, and did not die till the reign of James the First.

ceeds

ceeds much oftener from moral, than from physical causes. Your imagination, for instance, is as lively and as picturesques now as it could have been at eighteen; and for the same reason, that you are as little engaged in the turbulent agitations, the sordid principles, and interested schemes of the world now, as you were then.—These are the sullen demons which put to flight the fair forms of imagination, and annihilate the refined pleasures, which never subsist but in conjunction with gentleness of disposition, and simplicity of heart.

Your valley is delightful, and you cannot think how much I felt myself obliged to you for wishing me of your party. I agree with you as to the effect such a scene might have upon such lovers as are really in love; but as this is a circumstance which happens much less frequently than the misses are apt to suppose, a ball-room does better for small talk than an Arcadian solitude. I could not help regretting the disappointment of your curiosity, which, as censorious as you seem to think me, I am afraid I am not likely to censure so much as it might deserve. It deserved a great deal, and I am ready to bestow it, if you clambered at any hazard of hurting yourself.

There can be no manner of doubt of the frequent flight of my scraps of paper across St. George's Channel, while you are there to catch them, though I shall

I shall be much happier when I can send them from Clarges Street to Bolton Row! But pray take notice, that though I am as old as a Sibyl, I am not so wise, and I hope you will not insist upon my composing either verses or oracles.

How can you regret the want of that indifference which would annihilate some of the best dispositions of the soul, and so many of the most exquisite pleasures of life! Is it reasonable to wish to reject the possession of any real good, merely because it may happen not be a perpetuity? Through all the various stages of our existence, our friends are given us to aid our virtue, to heighten our enjoyments, and to lessen our cares: and with equal regard to our advantage are they at several periods removed, to instruct us that our hopes of perfect happiness must depend wholly on *that Friend who never dies.* Yet are we never left wholly destitute of those objects of inferior attention, which are by the constitution of our nature so necessary to our support. Amidst the successive changes of mortality, all who deserve will always find a friend; and whatever we may suffer from the absence of those we have lost, there is always sufficient cause for thankfulness in the happiness which we possess in those who remain.

LETTER XVII.

Clarges Street, *Feb.* 19, 1766.

And so, my dear Mrs. Vesey, you repay the impatience with which I have been longing to hear from you, by telling me at last, that you did not "intend to interrupt" me. I know not any thing at present that could put me into perfect good-humour with you, unless you were to snatch the pen out of my hand, and "interrupt" my Letter, by making me a visit yourself. The having you as near me this winter as the last, is all I want to complete every happiness in the power of society to bestow. But it is very fit that something should always be wanting to make up the entire system of felicity. Our enjoyments are wisely and kindly adapted to our present condition. They are sufficiently dispersed through every period of life to cheer our passage through it, and to engage our gratitude. They are never so completely assembled together as to circumscribe our hopes, or withdraw our dependance from Him who alone has happiness to bestow, and who has fixed it beyond the boundaries of varying and uncertain life. The tender regret which is felt for any distant

good,

good, is designed for a moral lesson to the heart, and should point its views and animate its progress towards that world, from which the pain of separation is for ever excluded, and where the sigh of absence shall be heard no more. The hopes of immortality certainly afford a noble subject of contemplation to the elevated faculties and progressive powers of the soul: but they ought to be received with peculiar gratitude by the social and friendly affections of the heart. The vigour and spirit of merely intellectual pursuits bear up the mind, and in some degree transport it beyond the perception of human concerns: but the soft and gentle dispositions of our nature exposed to every accident of painful sensibility stand in need of perpetual consolation and support. This is strange kind of talking to be transmitted from the metropolis of one great kingdom to the metropolis of another, but it will do neither of us any harm.

I wish you could make good your assertion, that Mrs. Dunbar would steal an hour every evening to see me. I have seen her only two afternoons, but she has been so good to call on me several times of a morning. I have the pleasure of answering your question about her health, that it is better this winter than the last, and that her looks are as angelical as ever. I think you ought to beg my pardon for a question which supposes me capable of

of envying you any advantage whatever. Besides I must be very unjust if I could grudge you Mrs. Dunbar, to whom you have so much better a claim than I; as well as very ungrateful, as it is to you that I am indebted for the pleasure of her acquaintance.

I am flattered by Mr. Southwell's * remembrance, as I was by the notice which he took of me at Spa. He frighted me exceedingly one evening by venturing out of a hot room into a torrent of rain to escort me; for he was not well, and it seemed to be running the hazard of his life. However, as he came off unhurt, I am glad to mention it, as I know not how to repay him so well as by raising him in your good opinion; and I am sure you will love him the better for such an instance of attention to your friend.

You gave me infinite perplexity by the variety of your address to Mr. Chambers. It did not at all appear whether the said Mr. Chambers was two men, or only one man divided into two streets; and in either case you left me utterly at a loss to guess for which of the two men, or for which half of the one man, the honour of your note was intended. In despair of any discovery of my own, I left the affair to the sagacity of my messenger, and

* Afterwards Lord De Clifford; father to the present Lord.

I hope,

I hope, by his account, that he delivered your note very right.

My Letter was begun two days ago, but I waited till I could tell you I had been at your house, which I was too ill to do yesterday. I called this morning; and before I received your Letter I had walked out of my way twice in the dirt, merely to look at the outside of it, and rejoiced in the spruce appearance of the door and windows as an earnest of your return.

I have not seen Mrs. Montagu since I begun my Letter, so cannot answer your question about the author you mention. I shall see her this evening at Lady Sophia Egerton's, and will ask her. Mrs. Montagu looked better this evening than I ever remember, till a feverish cold which confined her for a fortnight made her fall away.

I dined one day with Mrs. J. Pitt.—There was nobody there but Mrs. Howe, and the party was extremely cheerful and agreeable. Adieu.

LETTER XVIII.

Clarges Street, *Feb.* 19, 1766.

You have enjoined me an impracticable task, my dear Mrs. Vesey, for I can get no admission into your house.—The knocker conveys no other welcome to me than the melancholy echo of empty rooms, which however is a much less unpleasing sound, than if they were to strike me with a voice of gay festivity when you are not there. I was happy too in reflecting that I had nothing to lament which would preclude your return, but that I could look forward with cheerful hope to next winter for the pleasure of seeing you.

To give the utmost possible satisfaction to your enquiry about the Letters which you mention, I asked Lord L—— * himself; who assured me that he had never read them through, and moreover, seemed to be very clearly of opinion that he did not write them.—Seriously, you may deny his being

* Probably George Lord Lyttelton, who was intimately acquainted with both ladies; but what Letters these were which were attributed to him, the Editor does not know. Many years afterwards two volumes of Letters were, with equal untruth, published in the name of his son.

the author with the fullest certainty. It seems they were writ by Lord Corke.

A weak head and fluttering nerves have obliged me to quit a large jovial company and a heated room; and I am retired to muse, and sip my solitary tea in the cool silence of my own apartment, where there is nothing to interrupt my conversation with you, for which I willingly leave all the philosophers, historians and poets on my shelf.—Indeed, if these were my only resource for entertainment, I must often feel a miserable vacuity: for whatever magnificent compliments to excuse your own wicked idleness, you may make about interrupting my reveries, they are usually formed so much more by my heart than by my head, that any intelligence from Lucan, instead of interrupting, will only serve to continue them with the more force and spirit.

I am far from pretending to solve your difficulties, but let us consider them a little together. "The triumphs of bodily strength and agility, mixed with savage cruelty," are in truth no picture of *our* species, but properly belong to the beasts of the desart: as the "wicked arts of ambition and policy in minds exalted by knowledge" are the characteristics of demons. But, according to Rousseau's system, *faut il etre ou brebis ou mauvais ange?* Surely the far greater part of mankind are neither the one, nor the other. I agree with you, that if

human nature, in general, was to be estimated by the figure which it too commonly makes in history, the consideration would be extremely mortifying. But would it be fair to form an idea of the general constitution of the elements from the accounts of some particular instances of their irregularity? The earthquake or the storm, which perhaps once in a century, lays waste half a province, is transmitted to posterity in all the detail of circumstantial description; while the gentle influences of beneficent seasons, which for successive years diffuse plenty and cheerfulness throughout the globe, pass unrecorded and unmarked. It is in the moral as in the natural world. The violent passions and perverse principles by which great and striking revolutions are effected in states and kingdoms, are the chief objects of history, which take no notice of the virtues which exalt and embellish humanity in the regular tenour of common life.

Yet in the most favourable view, there must ever be too much reason for your lamentation, that "the noblest gifts of Heaven are perverted." To ask why it is so, is to ask in other words, why there should be any such thing in the universe as an imperfect intelligence furnished with a power of choice. All created beings must be liable to err: in those of the higher classes probably the powers of the understanding are so exalted, that all temptations

tations to ill, compared with the advantages of obedience, appear as insignificant as, to our conceptions, the most trifling toy to an inestimable jewel; and thus the choice is, without hesitation, determined to good.

In our terrestrial composition and degenerated nature, the solicitations of sense, the violent impulses of passion, and the madness of extravagant wishes, will be continually in motion to seduce and hurry the understanding into a false judgment, and to pervert the will. Yet infinite wisdom and goodness is fully vindicated, when notwithstanding all the motives to deviation, such powers and assistances are allotted us, as honestly applied and sought for, will enable us to fulfil the conditions which are required from our frail nature. We are in our present state evidently not formed to be either perfectly virtuous or happy; but merely probationers for virtue and for happiness, to which we are progressively advancing, if with unremitting diligence we struggle against our wrong tendencies, and use and exert a constant endeavour at unlimited improvement, and perpetual approach towards that perfection which, when our task is over, will be our reward.

I know not how I have been led on to say more than I intended, and I wish I may not have preached you fast asleep: but when you throw a subject in my

my way, I am insensibly drawn on to pursue it. I am very little qualified to answer your enquiries. I should much rather wish for such a power of persuasion as could prevail on you not to raise difficulties to your own mind by unnecessary curiosity. All the truths respecting our duty are sufficiently evident and clear: with the rest we have no concern; and endless speculations about them, serve only to withdraw our attention from a more important task.

LETTER XIX.

Clarges Street, *March* 25, 1766.

It is indeed too certain, my dear Mrs. Vesey, that I am very little qualified to preach from my own example; but my example neither weakens the force of truth, nor alters the nature of things. I acknowledge it to be at least as necessary for me to preach to myself, as to you*; and the

* So argued St. Paul, and with similar humility,—*lest that by any means when I have preached to others, I myself should be a cast-away.* 1 Cor. ix. 27.

more

more we preach to ourselves, and to each other, it is to be hoped the wiser we may grow. Your giving up the case as incurable, I think, arises from a wrong supposition. We are often, I believe, too apt to charge upon constitutional distemper, the disorders which might be alleviated at least by a proper exertion of the powers which are allotted to our help. The force of right principles will always, in some degree, contribute to strengthen the weaknesses of the heart. Though it cannot prevent the apprehensions inseparable from insecure possession, it will however provide us with consolation under them, and consolation is the very remedy we most want in a state to which security is denied, and blessing reserved for our reward when disappointment is no longer necessary to our trial. You and I, my dear friend, owe some of our most exquisite pleasures to strong affections; and we must be contented with the proportionable share of pain to which they are liable. We shall be more than contented; we shall be thankful for it, if it produces that effect on our mind for which it is so evidently intended.

I heartily grieve to think what you must have felt from so affecting a scene as that which you describe; but it would have done you more good to write to me, than to have fixed your thoughts on an object so very painful.

Indeed

Indeed you may be perfectly easy about my ever giving the least hint of any conversation relating to your friend, which I could not have done without being at once unfaithful to you and impertinent to her. Let your knowledge of her virtues free you from any concern about her peace of mind, which, by all that I can judge, seems to be founded on a rock, which not all the attacks of stormy life can ever shake. Her character often reminds me of an observation in Seneca, which has always struck me with a full conviction of its truth, that "nothing is really great which is not calm and gentle."

Mrs. Montagu is very well, and wishes you hanged, a douceur which probably you might not expect, but indeed she expressed it very pathetically. I believe at that minute she spoke from *your* principle of wishing not to know any body worth knowing unless it was possible to see them every day.

I will endeavour to arrange and finish some scattered stanzas which I made for you last summer, if you will send me a promise that you will not shew nor mention them to any mortal*. There is

* This prohibition, however, was soon withdrawn, for these beautiful verses were inserted in the next edition of Mrs. Carter's Poems.

a kind

a kind of vanity in supposing that you will have any temptation to do it, but it is a vanity arising more from my persuasion of your partiality to the writer than from any opinion of the verses, of which, to say truth, I have no manner of opinion at all, either good, bad, or indifferent.

I beg that in your next Letter you will not hustle me in a crowd, and then make an excuse that you cannot find room to speak to me. Pray take notice that Mrs. Howe calls on me almost every day, and reform your life and manners accordingly. There is but little hope of any alteration in mine, for after your making me wait so many weeks for your last Letter, I answer it in four days.

LETTER XX.

Clarges Street, *April* 11, 1766.

Now are you not a wretch to write the very first Post to satisfy your own curiosity, when you often make me wait whole weeks in impatient expectation of hearing from you? And have I not a fine

a fine opportunity of revenging myself? It may be so, but I am far enough from designing to make use of it; for never, my dear Mrs. Vesey, shall any such little, silly, harmless wish of your heart be disappointed as I have the power of gratifying; and accordingly I immediately send you the verses, and should be very glad if they better deserved your impatience. You will think my imagination marvellously fond of sepulchral scenes, which, however, it would fly with the utmost horror, did not the perspective extend to happier views.

I have at last got admission into your house, but I see no alteration in it except in the outside, and the great room below stairs, which is indeed so altered that I should not have known it, and I suppose much for the better; but I have such a fondness for any thing that has once been connected in my mind with ideas of pleasure, that I could not help regretting the change. It grieved me to think that I could never more in the same situation see that solemn opera moon which you kindly took so much pains to shew me through the green curtain one night, and which formed a picture which still remains unfaded in my imagination. Alas, the green curtain is now an impenetrable brick wall, and the chimney has usurped the place of the window.

Mrs.

Mrs. D'Oyley* and I the other night, sitting diametrically opposite in a large circle, tacitly wished for you, and agreed that you would have thrown a most delightful irregularity into the form. We afterwards met and compared our thoughts, and I was mortified to find she had so far the advantage over me as to have fixed the very flower in the carpet on which you would have stuck your chair. I only had you in general full in my view. I promised her to write you an account how perfectly well our wishes had agreed.

I am too well persuaded of the justice of all you say of Mrs. Handcock† not to be willing to allow an exception for her; and I heartily wish I could express my sense of her merit in an instance of more consequence.

* Now of Curzon-street; widow of John D'Oyley, Esq. and sister to Lady Mendip. This Lady's affectionate friendship for, and kind attentions to, Mrs. Carter, never ceased till the hour of her death, and they were returned with equal regard. Mrs. Vesey's peculiar art in breaking a circle, and forming little separate parties for conversation, must be still remembered with pleasure by every one who enjoyed her acquaintance.

† A very excellent Lady, nearly related to Mrs. Vesey's first husband, who always resided with her.

LETTER XXI.

Lambeth, *May* 22, 1766.

As I am tolerably well to-night, after a great deal of head-ache, I will not defer writing any longer, though my spirits are very low, as I have just parted with Mrs. Montagu, who is to set out to-morrow for the north, where she proposes to remain for the whole summer, and perhaps the autumn. I should see just as little of her if she was to spend all that time at Sandleford; and yet there is something in the circumstance of her being at so great a distance which renders this separation from her particularly affecting to me. I am to leave London the day after, and go to Lambeth Palace, where I shall stay during the absence of the Archbishop, who is going on his visitation, and I could not resist staying with Mrs. and Miss Talbot, though I long to get to the sea-shore, and be fixed in my own little quiet retreat for the remainder of the year.

The next I hope will bring me the happiness of meeting my scattered friends again in town, and make the number quite complete by your arrival in Bolton-row. Yet when the heart is indulged in every

every wish which it forms below the stars, how short must be its enjoyment! I scarcely recollect any passage in antiquity so melancholy as the speech of a celebrated orator, who being asked how he did, answered, " As well as any one can do who is turned of fourscore, and who considers death as the greatest of all evils *." Poor Isocrates! Some of the ancients, I think, have censured the reply for the want of philosophical fortitude; but surely it implies rather the want of philosophical pride and unfeelingness; for I cannot help thinking that death, when considered without any regard to futurity, must have appeared the most dreadful to the best and most amiable characters. Such brutes as Diogenes and Crates indeed, might treat the idea of death very cavalierly; might throw themselves on the first dunghill and die without regret. For what motive had they to wish to live? They cared for nobody; and the world, which in this instance is always perfectly just and well-bred, returned the compliment in its full force, and nobody cared for them.

It is not at all wonderful that such philosophers as these should preach and practise the utmost degree of fortitude with regard to an event in which

* See a very different reply to the same question, and which forms a striking contrast between Pagan and Christian feelings, towards the close of Letter LV.

they

they were so little concerned. But a mind adorned by elegant talents, and a heart attached by gentle affections, had too much to lose with indifference. The thought of a final separation from every exercise of understanding, and from every object of love, must have been sufficiently painful to justify the most pathetic lamentations. It would, I believe, have been impossible for Socrates, with all his social dispositions, to have parted from his friends, and walked out of life with as much composure as if he only quitted them to take a turn in the groves of Academus, if he had not fortified his mind by hopes full of immortality.

Your story of the very unhappy mother who lost an only child with such aggravating circumstances of grief, excessively affected me. Surely the loss of understanding, which will render her insensible to such a misfortune, is a great blessing.

I began this Letter before I left Clarges Street, but was prevented from finishing it. I came to Lambeth yesterday: I am lodged in my favourite part of this venerable old building, and which has undergone the fewest modern alterations. My prospect from one window is a long green court, terminated by the gateway which forms a fine perplexity of arches in all directions. The other side of my tower is shaded by tall trees, and through their branches I have a view of the Thames which washes their roots. As nobody occupies this side of the

Palace at present but myself, I have great amusement in rambling over it. I think you would be delighted with all these long narrow gothic passages, which lead one knows not whither. I have discovered a little window in one of them, which has a view down into the chapel, and I design to look through it this evening by moonlight. Will not you accompany me?—Yes, you shall, whether you will or not. For the present, Adieu.

LETTER XXII.

Deal, *June* 20, 1766.

NOTHING could so effectually make your peace with me, after such an unmerciful long silence, as a representative * which bears your name, though not quite so much as I could wish your resemblance. I owe you a thousand thanks for this instance of your affection, which I shall carry with me over hill and dale, and converse with at every favourite spot. I believe you would have been di-

* A drawing in crayons of Mrs. Vesey, a very strong likeness, now in the Editor's possession. He has also a small cameo, apparently done for her, inscribed *Sylph*, which may perhaps be the *representative* here alluded to.

verted

verted this afternoon if you had heard the criticisms of Mrs. Underdown*, (my chief friend in this place, whom I believe you have often heard me mention), and how exactly she pointed out in what particulars the face and figure was, and was not like, and I think you would have admitted her remarks, as a proof that I had drawn a stronger resemblance of you than the artist.

I obeyed the invitation in your card for to-day, with as much punctuality at Deal as in Clarges Street, and should have done for Bolton Row. To realize this ideal assignation, and transport myself as far as possible to the cliffs of Snowden, I took my solitary ramble into the wildest and most unfrequented part of the country that lay within the compass of my terrestrial abilities. This is, perhaps, a limitation which you do not understand, for you Sylphs† who range "the chrystal wilds of air" can have but very little notion of the difficulties which impede poor wayfaring mortal gentlewomen, condemned to trudge up and down the surface of

* A very amiable and excellent lady, whose affection for Mrs. Carter began in her childhood, and never ceased till her own death. Her only daughter married Mrs. Carter's eldest brother.

† Mrs. Montagu and Mrs. Carter used to term Mrs. Vesey *the Sylph*, from the airy elegance of her fancy, and the flights of her imagination, which hardly seemed to belong to a creature "of this degraded and degenerate state."

the

the earth in leathern shoes. I travelled, however, as far into your element as I could reach without wings, and ascending a cliff where all was uninhabited waste around me, and all blank ocean below.—Here I sat me down at the corner of a little copse blasted by the sea breezes, and took you out of my pocket. The broken irregular scene around us, the tide rolling beneath, and the coast of the opposite kingdom, which was full in our view, led us to converse on that tremendous transformation of the deluged world, when the fountains of the great deep burst their inclosures, and probably disjoined the solid continent. This led me to compare the present appearance of the natural and moral world, with their original state; when the gay and smiling scenes of uniform beauty in the external creation, were adapted to the internal, calm, and happy temper of the uncorrupted mind. But a perpetual course of the gentle action of unruffled elements, and the unfading bloom of the vernal world, would lose their influence on our distempered frame; which seems to require a mixture of turbulence and deformity to awaken the languid powers of perception, and to enable them to receive the gentle impressions which are raised by the view of order and of beauty. Nor is our pleasure more interested in this disposition of things than our virtue. Objects of vast and stupendous

ruin, and mournful instances of our frail condition, subdue the mad excesses of our pride, calm the hurry of disordered passions, and sober the extravagance of idle wishes.—Thus the overthrow of the works of art makes us sicken at the folly of human schemes; and the devastations of nature awe us by the sense of divine omnipotence and justice. To allure us to this moral lesson, is perhaps the reason of that strange delight which the imagination feels in the view of objects which in themselves are so little fitted to inspire any pleasurable ideas.

When we had discussed this point, I quitted my station, and rambled from one bleak eminence to another, till my view was somewhat diversified by the appearance of a house which looked rather like the mansion of solitary despair, than an abode of social life. It was situated in a narrow bottom between two high hills, covered with a melancholy green. It had a prospect of the sea in front, and was shaded behind by a little dark grove, which the croaking of ill-omened birds rendered still more dismal. Not a tree beside within view, nor a single object of rural beauty. We pitied the poor joyless tenants of this lonely abode, and left it with a new relish for the pleasures of social life.

I have told you how we past four hours on the South Foreland, and now pray tell me what we observed

observed on the cliffs of Snowden: and tell me, moreover, what you were doing in town during that age in which I was wondering what was become of you. I shall be very impatient to hear of your being safely arrived. Adieu.

LETTER XXIII.

Deal, *July* 1, 1766.

If I had writ to you, my dear Mrs. Vesey, as often as you have been in my thoughts, you would have found that a Correspondent at a distance might be just as troublesome as a visitor within the length of a street. Happily for you, however, it is much easier to think than to write, and my imagination has held many a conversation with you, for which I have been much the better, and you not at all the worse. But it is impossible to dream on for ever in the world of ideas, and the most visionary speculatist must sometimes awake to the cares and solicitudes of real life. In spite of all my reveries about you, I remain unsatisfied, and find that I want the confirmation of a testimony under your own hand and seal, to prove to me that you are well and happy, and free from that

miserable apprehension of losing seven or eight of your senses, which haunted you when I left London*. When you have, in the first place, informed me of these particulars, my next subject of curiosity is to know whether you ever think of me; for I am not sure that this is necessarily implied in my thinking on you.

I have rambled many a solitary mile since I saw you, in all that rural scenery which so naturally tends to sooth the affections of the heart. You are twirled round in the *fandango* of the world, which usually jumbles all objects, past, present, and to come, in one general confusion of head. After all, I will not fight for my system, nor absolutely determine whether people universally think most on their friends in town or in the country: I am only sure of one plain matter of fact, that wherever I am I very often think of you, and feel myself greatly obliged to you for furnishing me with a subject so very pleasing to my thoughts.

* From that "miserable apprehension," which was at last realized, Mrs. Vesey was never freed. That painful idea is several times referred to in this Correspondence. It brings to mind a similar apprehension of Dean Swift, which he is known frequently to have expressed, and which had a similar termination in reality.

LETTER XXIV.

Deal, *July* 15, 1766.

Most impatiently have I longed every Post to receive a Letter from you, and should have been very uneasy, had you not sufficiently accustomed me to your idle trials not to wonder. Still I cannot resist your desire of hearing from me immediately, though a little slow fever has for these last two or three days rendered me wretchedly unfit, and averse to setting about any thing. I am in hopes that my having got every body amused abroad this afternoon, and being left to the absolute silence and solitude of my own room, will do me more good than lemon draughts. The gaiety of that sweet landskip which is within view of my window, the freshness of the air, and above all the perfect repose in which I sit, and the reveries in which I indulge my imagination, inspirits the languor which any more active circumstances would harass to death.

In this situation you will easily believe I am very little disposed to wish for a companion, as there are so very few that could adapt themselves to my present state.—And yet I do wish for you. You would tune your voice to the languid delicacy of my

nerves, and give a soft colouring to the faint shadows of my imagination; and by engaging the attention of my heart, you would give me a higher degree of life, without exertion or fatigue. It is well that I am addressing myself to you who will understand me; but to most people in the world I should seem to be talking in my sleep.

I am obliged to you for the kind advice about the antimony. I have constantly persevered in taking it, as I believe it has in general been of some use to me. It is so undistinguishable from Madeira, that to prevent any body tasting it in any hurtful quantity, I had labelled the bottle "more than a spoonful, poison." My maid happened to see it on a shelf, and came to me lately with a look of the utmost consternation and terror, and most pathetically entreated me not to take such stuff, or, if I must take it, to be sure not to forget when I had done it, and swallow a second spoonful. I pacified her fears as well as I could by promising a world of caution. At the same time I could not help secretly reflecting on the violence and rapidity with which the generality of mankind hurry on to the absolute and fullest completion of every circumstance of hope and fear that is set before them; and that I suppose forms the great difference of intellectual character. They whose understandings are exercised by thought and observation, trace

things

things through their successive stages to probable and remote consequences. Uncultivated minds on the contrary perceive no intermediate degree either in nature or in action, but pass on directly to extremities; and thus discover nothing in poison, but the idea of irremediable and instant death*.

I heartily wish the tide would convey your quiver to my walks on the Kentish shore. I long to see all the sportings of your imagination at Lucan, and often please myself with the idea that I shall some time or other visit you there. Not that it will ever happen: but the happiness is, that it is not in the power of conviction to annihilate the visions of fancy†.

Mrs. Montagu is tolerably well, but in a situation I believe heartily disagreeable to her taste. Some hours however of very exquisite pleasure she must enjoy in conveying relief and assistance to the distrest objects who have nothing to hope but from her. The coal mine goes on prosperously.

* In medicine as well as in food it is the excess that makes the poison. Every thing that acts violently upon the human frame is a poison; and the most beneficial medicine would prove fatal if taken in too large quantities, as small doses even of active poisons, vegetable as well as mineral, are often administered with safety and success.

† Mrs. Carter's conviction was right; she never did go to Lucan.

My

My Irish beggar has visited me again this year, and talked me out of a farther addition to her wardrobe. I expect to have a regular annual visit from her, and feel some vanity in furnishing the single instance in which any of her country people ever enjoyed an English pension.

I am very happy in the share which you flatter me I possess in Mrs. J. Pitt's partiality. The greater it is, the more I feel myself obliged to you, whose friendship introduced me to her with so much advantage. I always consider every acquisition of this sort as one of the real blessings of life. Indeed my thoughts mix so little with the general interests, and passions, and pleasures of what is called the world, that if it was not for the spirit of my affection for those whom I esteem and love, a mind so indolent would fall fast asleep.

I was too ill to finish my Letter yesterday, but will no longer delay sending it. I am just going to sit quietly for a little while by the sea side,

> "Della placida marina
> La fresc' aura a respirar."

Not that any of the elements are very placid at present, but I hope you have warmer suns and calmer skies at Lucan. Do pray tell me what you are doing there, and sometimes take me into your solitary

tary retreats. Pray, my dear Mrs. Vesey, keep your imagination employed in decorating the banks of the Liffy, and it will be the less at leisure to disturb the tranquillity of your heart.

LETTER XXV.

Deal, *Aug.* 6, 1766.

A THOUSAND thanks to you for your kind concern about my health. My little fever vanished in about a week, yet still I am not well; my nerves are in a wretched state, and my spirits fluttering and low. Yet what I feel is rather an absence of joy, than any positive addition to my usual little disorders.

> ———" I feel my genial spirits droop,
> My hopes all flat, nature within me seems
> In all her functions weary of herself."

Very well—but I am not blind, nor in prison, nor among heathens, nor betrayed by my friends. If people would be just enough to heaven, and kind enough to themselves to recollect what they do not suffer,

suffer, it would greatly alleviate the sense of what they do suffer. It is particularly happy for me at present that I am in a situation which allows me to pass much of the day alone. It is so much one's duty to contribute as far as may be to the cheerfulness of family society, that I discover nothing of the present languid state of my spirits, but talk as usual at the hours when we meet. But this exertion is extremely painful to me, and I always long for the repose of solitude, in which I find myself much better than when I am obliged to speak. Still I hope that more favourable weather will brace my nerves, and that if I am so happy to meet you this year in London, I shall enjoy your society with my usual spirit and pleasure.

In the mean time when I am sitting alone on the sea-beach, you often enliven the languor of my mind, and I send my kindest thoughts to you across the ocean. You have no reason to wish at present for my presonal appearance, though it is very probable that if my inclinations were not fettered by external things, I should be strongly tempted to fly to you. Mrs. Montagu I am persuaded would take the same route if she too was not fettered by external things; for, to the comfort of little people, excess is as strong an impediment sometimes as defect. I cannot get to you because I have not a post-

post-chaise; and Mrs. Montagu cannot get to you because she has a coal-mine. She is gone however on an excursion into Scotland for a week.

Be so good as to tell Mrs. Handcock that I do like the "Vicar of Wakefield," and likewise that I do not: by which means in any case I hope I am secure of being of her opinion. Indeed it has admirable things in it, though mixt with provoking absurdities *, at which one should not be provoked if the book in general had not great merit. A small alteration in the author's plan might have furnished I think a very useful lesson. The character of Burchell, as it now stands, is entirely out of nature, whether we suppose him to be guided by good principles or bad. If the author had strongly marked him as acting by no principles at all, every instance of his behaviour would have been natural; for every contradiction and every absurdity is natural to a humourist; and the satirizing a character of all others perhaps the most destructive to the peace of human society, would have been a very instructive performance.

I admire the spirit of your polar traveller, and shall hope to have a full account of his observations heightened and improved by your description. One would wish by some enchantment to be trans-

* Is not that also the exact character of its author?

ported

ported to the view of such a scene; but I have no idea of wishing to live out of the reach of the sunbeams. If you are ever a star-gazer, do look upon Mars this month, for he now makes a most magnificent appearance, and throws quite a lustre on the waves. I shall look on him with the greater pleasure on the sea shore, if I fancy you are at the same time surveying his splendour on the banks of the Liffy. I thank you for your transcript from Fairfax *, which is very pretty, but I am so happy to have in my possession some more spirited descriptions of your own, which always carry the stamp of original painting.

Adieu! I am going to take a walk this afternoon, which I hope will give me spirits to encounter a visit to two or three misses at the end of it. O dear, O dear! how shall I contrive to make talk!

* The translator of Torquato Tasso. He was also author of some original poems.

LETTER XXVI.

Deal, *Aug.* 30, 1766.

I HAVE not heard from Mrs. Montagu since the melancholy account which you mention, nor can tell in what manner she is affected by it. That she will be most sincerely grieved at this event*, I am very certain: but I have no idea that she can feel it in the same manner as the loss of that person †, with whom she past so many hours, that she must, for some time have been reminded of him very often in every day. With regard to general opinion and the hopes of the world, there is no doubt much greater cause for her to regret the loss of him, who was setting out in the fresh career and full vigour of life, with a fair promise of extensive public usefulness, than of one who had finished the whole of his course except a few poor loitering steps on the borders of the grave. But the feelings of the heart are not regulated by general considerations: and any disappointment of the enthusiasm of admiration, is much more easily

* Probably the death of Sir James Macdonald, which happened abroad in the preceding month.

† Lord Bath.

supported,

supported, than what touched the tenderness of affection. I am heartily sorry for the death of this extraordinary young man, whose loss must be so strongly felt by all with whom he was intimately connected. Above all it quite sinks one's spirits to think on the situation of his poor mother *.

I am glad you are a star-gazer; my imagination, I heartily thank it, often places you near me when I am sitting on the beach where you so kindly wish to be. We may take many an excursion together to the stars, these clear autumnal evenings, and entirely forget the imperceptible tract between Deal and Lucan. Nothing so much connects the thoughts and amusements of distant friends, as a taste for universal objects. In every variety of situation, the blue heavens, and the sun, moon, and stars, shine with a common lustre, and form a common subject of delight, and of contemplation. Not but that, from a very natural gravitation to earth, I sometimes wish you to be acquainted with the particular spot which I inhabit, and with which I am determined to believe that you would be pleased. You would at least, I think, find some amusement in observing how far the patient arts of cultivation have subdued and improved a naturally untractable

* Lady Margaret Macdonald, daughter to the Earl of Eglintoun.

and barren soil. The plough traces its furrows along the very edge of the rocky cliff, and waving harvests are reflected from the surface of the ocean. In some spot the savage breaks out just enough to shew the original wild temper of the country. This mixt appearance respects only the parts immediately bordering on the sea. All, at some little distance from it, is uniformly riant and beautiful to a high degree.

Do pray, my dear Mrs. Vesey, sit down and tell me a thousand things of which your iniquitous visitors defrauded me in your last Letter. I will however forgive your omission of 999, provided the thousandth gives me some information about your coming to England next year. I know not how great your fortitude may be, but I am persuaded that I should feel more vanity with knowing that people will cross half a dozen counties (as Mrs. Dunbar and I do about you) to express their wishes and their doubts, their hopes and their fears about their seeing and their not seeing me, than if I was the first genius, or wore the first coronet in the kingdom.—From your profound admiration of a genius, and your perfect indifference about a coronet, you will be violently scandalized at my ranging them in the same class. But I cannot help it; they both fall under the predicament of external things, and there is nothing in either of them,

them, *per se*, to make one love the people to whom they happen to belong, either the better or the worse.

And now I am talking of genius, have I told you, or have you heard, of a strange quarrel between David Hume, and J. J. Rousseau? Poor Rousseau to be sure was undone by the unmolested repose to which he has been doomed in England *, and it was very fit he should relieve himself by making some bustle, as nobody was charitable enough to disturb him. Hume is extremely angry, and wants to print the correspondence, but is advised to forbear. When they were together he he humoured Rousseau like a peevish child, to which certainly he had no right unless he could

* Mrs. Carter seems to have formed a very just idea of Rousseau's character, though she always refused to read his, Voltaire's, or any other works of a similar tendency; which might, she said, do her hurt, and could do her no good. Perhaps it might be well if other persons whose faith and practice were not established upon so firm a foundation as her's, had made a similar resolution. Rousseau indeed has done much more harm to society than either Hume or Voltaire have done. They attacked Christianity, which, even without the very able defenders it has had, can defend itself; but Rousseau endeavoured to destroy the boundary between good and evil, vice and virtue; and by allowing the freest scope to the passions, without the imputation of any guilt to the indulgence of them, he has confounded the right and wrong of moral actions, and done incalculable mischief.

have pleaded the understanding of a child in excuse for its humours. Natural infirmities of temper are to be treated with tenderness and compassion: but when people work up perverseness into a philosophical system, and contrive to make themselves as troublesome as they possibly can, they forfeit all claim to indulgence, and every encouragement to their unreasonable humours is an injury to society.

LETTER XXVII.

Deal, *Oct.* 13, 1766.

I TAKE your case, my dear Mrs. Vesey, to be neither more nor less than that of many other odd people, who love their friends extremely well, but are too lazy to give them the pleasure of hearing it. Do not put yourself into a fright about the loss of memory. Your present instance was only this. You laid it down as a position (wicked creature) that you could not write to me without a frank. You comforted yourself with a general notion that you had no frank; and so if my good genius, in some general concussion of the chaos on your

shelf, had not thrown the said frank full in your eyes before you had time to shut them, you would have gone on for some weeks longer, bemoaning yourself every day most pathetically and rhetorically to Mrs. Handcock, that you could not write to Mrs. Carter, for that it was impossible to write to her without a frank, and you did not know that you had a frank in the world.—And indeed how should you know it when you had never looked? All this is not want of memory, but the mere sophistry of indolence, with which unhappily I am too well acquainted not to comprehend all its tricks.

But you will be angry with me if I do not treat your complaint of the loss of memory more seriously. I am inclined to believe this defect arises from the very cause which you seem to think should prevent it; the strength of the affections, and a constant attachment to the interests of the heart. Want of memory probably arises principally from want of attention, for things are remembered, I believe, pretty nearly in proportion as they are felt; which will account for the force and extent of this faculty in young people. To young people every object, however insignificant in itself, is striking merely as it is new, and whatever is striking seizes a place in the memory. In our progress through life, as the charm of universal curiosity abates, we select and confine the objects of our attention,

tention, and our memory becomes contracted in a proportionable degree.

The truth of my system is mighty easily proved. Only banish from your heart its stongest affections: annihilate all reveries on your absent friends, and amuse yourself no longer with the charming phantoms of a fine imagination; and I will venture to engage, that you will soon find your powers of local memory so wonderfully improved, that whenever you deposit a row of pins or an inch of packthread, you shall be sure to find them again, *a point nommé*, without the least hesitation. Now is a register for rows of pins, and ends of packthread, the important advantage which you would wish to purchase in exchange for whatever interests the heart, ennobles the understanding, or amuses the imagination? Certainly not.—Why then, my dear friend, let us be contented with that limitation of human capacity, which does not allow us to crowd the scattered emoluments of different ages into any one: or rather, let us be thankful for that gracious appointment which, through the several stages of mortal existence, permits us to exchange the less advantages for the greater; thus by progressive steps leading on the attention to nobler objects, and raising the mind to higher expectations.

A thousand thanks to you for making me happy by your intelligence of Mr. Vesey's having named his time for coming to England. Let us look forward with cheerful hope to the pleasures of our society next winter. The varying condition of life * does indeed forbid us any absolute dependance on our fairest expectations; yet surely where no present impediment appears, it is not right to torment ourselves by conjuring up all the possibilities of disappointment.

How shall I pacify your wrath against me for the atrocious enormity of styling genius *an external?* I am willing to allow indeed that it is not stuck on the outside of the head like a *pompone;* yet on the other hand, you will, I think, allow that it is no object of choice, nor constitutes any part of moral character †. But you were prevented

* Immortalia ne spere, monet annus, et almam
Quæ rapit hora diem.——Hor. Ode VII. Lib. iv.
The difference between the Epicurean and the Christian philosophy in the same application of the uncertainty of life is remarkable: the one uses it as an argument for the enjoyment of pleasure; the other for the rational indulgence of cheerful and innocent expectation.

† In this definition Mrs. Carter seems to avail herself of the logic of the Porch, with which from her intimate acquaintance with Epictetus, she might be supposed to be well acquainted.

External

vented by company from confuting my assertion, and I am prevented by the head-ache from defending it. Do not be in any manner of concern about me. The head-ache you know belongs to me, as much as any thing external can.

I cannot comply with your injunction of setting my mind to stare in my face, for you know I hate to be stared at; and consequently I never stare at myself, so can give you no account of my looks.

LETTER XXVIII.

Tunstal, *June* 20, 1767.

It was very mortifying to me, that in that last half hour, when there were a thousand things which I wished to say to you, I was too ill to be able to say any thing. I regretted my not being in a capacity to pursue you when you took

External and internal properly relate the one to the body, the other to the soul. Now if genius be not a moral quality of the soul, it is however much more remotely connected with the body: and if it be termed a faculty of the mind, still it is internal; and the distinction between the mind and the soul in our present state, is not very easy to be understood.

your

your flight, which possibly you might do with the more precipitation from the apprehension that if you had remained within my reach, you might have been obliged to act over a second part of that lamentable tragedy to which your volubility was once condemned by the Duchess of Q. Indeed it was prudent in you not to leave me a moment for deliberation, as I do not think I could have consented to part with you, though I was incapable of any other pleasure by your stay, than the knowledge that you were in the same room. How long will it be before I can hope for that pleasure again!

I am at present in a village extremely rural, and I believe very pleasant, if my head was not too uncomfortable to allow me to enjoy it. Enjoy it however I do, as an agreeable establishment for my sister *, who seems very well pleased with it. It is quite necessary to make one's mind easy with regard to the situation of others, to be persuaded of a very certain truth, that the odd kind of something which human creatures substitute for happiness, depends on the particular turn of every individual imagination. Some circumstances indeed are universally necessary as a foundation to the

* Mrs. Pennington. Archbishop Secker's friendship for Mrs. Carter had induced him to give the living of Tunstal to her brother in law Dr. Pennington.

different

different superstructures which our various tastes and inclinations raise: but these are distributed in a pretty equal proportion to all: and the principal difference in the several states of life arises from the objects of our own choice. Half the perplexities and troubles which we give ourselves and our friends, is occasioned by making our own fancy the standard by which we determine the condition of others.

I wish you had heard a concert of nightingales to which I was conducted by my little prattling nephew, who took the utmost care on the road that I might not be run over by a horse, or step into a pond. This careful guardian of mine is between four and five years old, and such a comical sensible little boy, that I believe you would not have objected to his being of the party*.

I propose to be at Deal on Tuesday, and hope to hear from you soon. I long to know your shemes, for it is by no means a clear point, but that in spite of your prepossession for Scarborough, you may be setting out for Spa.

* Let the vanity of the Editor be pardoned for the insertion of this trifling anecdote. He must be proud of every instance of the affection of his good and revered relation, which began so early, and never abated till the close of her exemplary life.

LETTER XXIX.

Deal, *June* 29, 1767.

ALAS! why could I not follow you, my dear Mrs. Vesey, into Kensington Gardens, where I might have claimed a share of your contemplations? I have seldom felt so much impatience at that wretched inability of all exertion which I so often feel, as when it deprived me of that last half hour, which for so many months I must not hope to regain. It would have been quite a sentimental luxury to have sat with you under a tree, and treasured up every kind expression which I know you would have bestowed on me, to sooth my mind during my absence. I am happy however in the knowledge that you were sorry to part with me, though I was not in a capacity of hearing it. This would be a wicked selfish kind of satisfaction, if my own feelings did not convince me that the very pain of separation from those one loves, is greatly preferable to most of the dull things which usually go by the name of pleasure.

I grieve for your present and harassing situation, and long journey to Scarborough; but I hope you will be benefited by it. Perfect health can never be the *partage* under their present form, of such consti-

constitutions as your's and mine. Weak nerves and strong feelings will never be cured by any change of air or water, but the air of paradise, and the waters which are bordered by the trees of life; where I hope we shall at last enjoy an infinitely more delightful meeting than we could have found in Kensington Gardens: for this will be unalloyed by the prospect of separation, besides the innumerable other advantages, of which even your imagination can at present form no idea.—Pray, if you do not recollect it, read the last chapter of Revelations.

I should very joyfully have accepted your invitation to a walk at Richmond; but I do with all my heart renounce your raking suppers. Beings of your sylphish composition may live without sleep, and think and act without relaxation: but my material constitution cannot possibly subsist in a state of perpetual vigilancy.

I question whether you would at present thank me for a sea breeze to night, as the heat which you found so excessive in town, and which was so moderate and delightful here, is now driven away by a cold east wind. Its duration it is to be hoped will not be long; and when the warm weather returns, you will probably be sheltered from it by the shades of Windsor, and fanned by zephyrs from the Thames. Write to me soon, that my

my thoughts may always know in what particular spot to find you.

LETTER XXX.

Deal, *Aug.* 28, 1767.

ALTHOUGH I had one pacquet travelling towards you, my dear Mrs. Vesey, which Mrs. Dunbar promised to convey, I should, according to your desire, have immediately dispatched another, to answer your enquiries, and thank you for the charming description of your journey, if I had not been confined for some days to a close attendance upon my father, who has been very ill. He is now well enough to go out, and I am returning to my usual *train de vie*, settling myself in my own apartment, and ready to receive and return the visits of my absent friends.

I am much obliged to you for your kind solicitude about my terrifying *reveil**. As to how it could happen, the poor creature had been ill for

* The Letter which describes this event first, was not found in the collection.

some

some days, and I feared there was something amiss in her head, but had no suspicion of its being in any considerable degree, so took no other precaution than the having two other servants very near her. I thought she was in all respects much better the night before, and she did not seem at all disordered. Between three and four I opened my eyes, and saw her with a bandage round her head, in a strange undress, and making a very dismal figure, standing with a candle at the foot of my bed, and talking absolute distraction. Without much difficulty I prevailed on her to quit the room, and return to her own. I was thrown into less immediate disorder than might have been expected, but felt the effect of the surprize pretty strongly afterwards; and indeed she did not suffer me to recover it, as she broke from the other servants, and haunted me all day; for though I soon locked my door, her very approach in the passage was sufficiently harassing. The next day she grew too outrageous to be suffered about the house, and was confined to her room. She is at length gone away, but was kept here till her senses, for the present at least, were perfectly recovered.

> "O by the mighty theme affected,
> Could I but see thy head dissected,"

says

says Matthew to Dick *; and much such another friendly kind of wish is your's to me, when you so kindly propose to me the amusement of having my curtains flung open by a spectre. I heartily thank you, but I want no other conviction than what is afforded me from an authority, which, besides its other claims to my submission, solves the difficulties which upon any other system are inexplicable in the appearance of things, and moreover so perfectly corresponds with the feelings of my own heart.—O but for *your* conviction I must be enabled to give a positive evidence! If I was to see a whole group of spectres, I could give no evidence more *positive* than what is already given, and it is impossible for me to give one of such credibility. But this point is decided by him † who was intimately acquainted with the human heart, and able to detect all its fallacies. Indeed, my dear friend, if was I to tell you I had seen an apparition, you would not believe me—you would not believe it, even if you at first supposed you had seen one yourself; and in either case your doubts might be very reasonable. The testimony of a single person, of whatever veracity, or of what-

* Prior's Alma.

† Our Saviour, in the parable of the rich man and Lazarus. *If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded though one rose from the dead.* Luke xvi. 31.

ever

ever understanding, in a point entirely out of the ordinary course of things, is liable to very just exceptions: fancy, distemper, imperfect and equivocal appearances, have a surprizing power of imposition, and to one or other of them you would ascribe the story.—But the testimony of a dozen persons to a fact often repeated is of quite another kind, and carries all the demonstration that can reasonably be demanded by common sense. If you did not mean to set me a talking on this subject, it will make you take effectual care for the future how you compliment your friends by wishing their curtains flung open by spectres.

For the present your servant. I must contemplate that rainbow which is rising out of the sea just opposite to my window. The rainbow is vanished, and *me voici à votre service* till I am called off again by a thunder-storm which is now growling at a distance. How doubly should I enjoy all this sublime scene if my wishes could transport you hither!

Since I begun my Letter I am made very happy by the hope which Mrs. Dunbar gives me that I shall see her at Deal. I flatter myself a little that the beauty of this part of the country will seduce them from Margate, as the bathing here is usually at the latter part of the summer very good. How could you so perversely resist the temptation

of

of this party? Nothing less than your finding an absolute cure for every evil of body and mind at Scarborough, will make me amends for the loss of that pleasure, which I should have felt in seeing you here. Adieu. The thunder has made such fearful work in my weak head, that I am scarcely able to get to the end of my paper. Remember you have writ me nothing but Notes for this age, for which I wish you a most unquiet conscience till you have made me ample amends.

LETTER XXXI.

Deal, *Sept.* 7, 1767.

Before this, my dear Mrs. Vesey, I imagine a Letter from me has convinced you, that, instead of setting myself to cast up the account of debtor and creditor between us, to the great perplexity of my head, I took the shorter method of following the impulse of my heart, and wrote to you as soon as I was disengaged from the constant attendance to which I was confined by my father's illness.

Though I had not the same prepossession in favour of Scarborough that you had, I feel disappointed

pointed that it has done you no good. Let me entreat you, however, to continue the waters while you are there, unless you find yourself positively the worse for them. It is a very usual case, I believe, in all mineral waters, not to discover any good effect at first, so do pray give Scarborough a fair trial. I know you are too apt not to give any medicine a sufficient time for operating on your constitution.

Whatever may be the effect of your journey to Scarborough in other respects, I heartily congratulate you on the happiness you must feel in reflecting on the benefit and comfort which your friendly attention has been to Lady Ann Dawson *. I cannot help thinking you are much better qualified for a companion to her than your revered friend, who is of a disposition that finds a cure for grief amidst the dissipation of a gay party. I do not by this mean any severe reflection; to people of quick and violent passions such expedients may be necessary, but a gentle mind requires a very different kind of treatment. To such a one all noise and hurry is distraction, and every thing that carries the least appearance of mirth seems a kind of profane insult on the object of its sorrows.

* The first lady of the present Viscount Cremorne. See her epitaph in the last edition of Mrs. Carter's Works.

Your

Your scheme of evening excursions in your chaises, and cottage tea-drinkings, seems to be an admirable one. The air has an unavoidable effect on the spirits, and any amusement which rises no higher than sober cheerfulness is the most likely to gain insensibly on the attention. I most sincerely wish you good success in your endeavours to alleviate the distresses of so amiable a character, and of restoring so valuable an example to society.

You need not have raised any scruple about talking to me of the sea, from its being a familiar acquaintance. All the objects of creation, however the same in themselves, acquire an endless variety from their different situations and accompaniments, and your description of Scarborough Cliff has furnished my imagination with a new and very fine picture. But you made my head giddy by leaning over the pale; I hope it is a strong one. But my comfort is, that Mrs. Handcock is with you, and has too much common sense to let you risque your neck for a prospect, though *you* have not, I believe, if you were left to yourself. Pray was you looking with so much earnestness from the top of the cliff to the bottom of the gulph in expectation of seeing the poor Bishop floundering and sprawling in the bathos? Never surely was there so perfectly anti-sublime a dignitary!

As

As you seem to have so laudable an admiration of the sea, I would fain flatter myself with the possibility of your one day taking a view of it from Deal. Indeed we have no rocks nor ruins here for your amusement, as the awful sublime of our ocean is contrasted by a landscape, gay in the brightest verdure, and decorated by all the ornaments of cultivation; however, within the distance of a very moderate airing you might be entertained with a coast as rude, and with cliffs as high, and with sea-birds as screaming, as your heart could wish; and your tea should be made from the water of a spring which rises in the middle of the waves *. Mr. and Mrs. Dunbar were at this place, and seemed as well pleased with its romantic situation as I wished them to be.

I sighed at that part of your Letter which seems to leave me no hope of our meeting in town next winter. The longer I live the more sensibly I feel any suspension of the society of those I most

* The place alluded to is St. Margaret's Bay, almost directly beneath the South Foreland, about five miles from Deal. Here is a very powerful spring, which rises at the foot of the cliff, and in every tide is covered by the sea. As soon as the sea leaves it, it clears itself almost immediately from the impurity of the salt water, and becomes perfectly fresh and limpid as it runs over the beach. What would this have been in the hands of the Roman Poets, had it been found in Italy!

esteem and love. But such interruptions in a world bounded by seas and mountains must often be unavoidable. However, I comfort myself that though the visible part of me is fettered, my thoughts have wings, and wherever you are they will take their flight to you; do therefore pray make an acquaintance with some M. P. or other, and let me have some franks directed for you. It really goes against me to make you pay for such trumpery as my Letters—not that you will ever be worth a groat whether I write to you or not, but it would be an ease to my own conscience.

LETTER XXXII.

Deal, *Oct.* 19, 1767.

A THOUSAND thanks to you for your kind sensibility to the anxiety which you so truly guessed I must feel from the apprehension of your being on the water during these outrageous storms. I had begun a Letter to you in the midst of one of them, but alas, I soon recollected that I knew not where to direct it, so I was obliged to wait till I could receive some intelligence from you. I should have been happier to have known that you were comfortably

fortably landed in Ireland, than that you have still that wretched *trajet* upon your spirits; but as the elements have till yesterday been more at peace, I hope long before this a halcyon sea has safely conveyed you to your port.

In spite of your reflections on the cowardice with which your own tragical exclamations inspired me in the Park, I should be tempted to envy you and Mrs. Handcock your passage through Wales, if I was not persuaded that your description gave me as full and lively an idea of the sublime and terrible of your prospects as if I had shared with you in the reality. After so complete an enjoyment of the vast objects which raise and expand all the powers of the mind in passing through such tracts of wild greatness and dreary desolation, your imagination is probably by this time glad to repose itself in the quiet shades of Lucan, and to indulge all the soft melancholy which is inspired by the view of calm autumnal scenes. I figure you to myself contemplating the fading woods, catching the faint whispers of the languid gale, and walking beneath the falling leaves, and in these pensive amusements, so congenial to the tenderest feelings of the heart, thinking over all your absent friends. In this society I am sure you will not fail to admit one, who by her affection for you at least is entitled to a distinction

which I may venture to affirm that very few in so high a degree can claim.

You thought it unnecessary to ask me to feel for you on bidding me farewell. I will not attempt to describe what I felt for myself, nor what I shall feel when I am in a situation where I was last year so happy as to see you every day. I find, however, a strange melancholy kind of satisfaction in reflecting, that this is a circumstance of regret in which scarcely any one can pretend to rival me, and consequently scarcely any one can have so real a loss by your absence as I shall have. But a time will come when we shall no more be divided by the Irish Sea. Meanwhile,

Tempri i divorzi amari,
O dolcissima amica, amor piu degno.
E la nost 'Alma impari
Come al Re degli amanti ancor sia bella.
Tosto fia che in suo Regno
Ei ne raccolga: & allor sara comforto
Del vinto mar congratularci in porto.

Before this arrives, however, I hope we may have many a comfortable *revoir* even in this tempestuous world, and endeavour to make each other fitter for a better, than either of us is at present.

I hope

I hope by this time you have the pleasure of seeing Mr. Vesey. Tell me when you write how he does, and whether he found more benefit from Spa than you did from Scarborough. Adieu!

LETTER XXXIII.

Deal, *Nov.* 25, 1767.

Mrs. Dunbar informed me that you were safely landed, and well, which kept me quiet from worse apprehensions, and only left me to vex at your being so idle. Your Letter last night gave me very different impressions, and I shuddered to think on the danger that had threatened me. Alas, how insecure are the best of all human enjoyments! —But we must be content to take the blessings of friendship and affection, with the abatement of that tax of anxiety which is so wisely imposed on them, till your "delightful image of death" becomes a reality, and we wake amidst a society from which we shall dread no future separation. In the mean time I am happy and thankful for the removal of the present danger, and joyfully accept the omen of the cheerful hope which you express of our meeting next winter.

By

By this time I hope so many calm days have at last conveyed Mr. Vesey safely to you. I am rejoicing in this sullen November sky, as it is accompanied by severe dry cold, which begins to relieve me from the miserable state of relaxation which I have suffered from the dampness of the summer and autumn.

As you so kindly interest yourself for me, and have sometimes exprest so much regret at my not being immoderately rich, I have a piece of intelligence for you which I am sure will give you pleasure.—Mr. and Mrs. Pulteney have had the goodness to engage to settle an annuity of a hundred a year on me. They have conveyed this favour to me in a manner so noble and so delicate, as greatly increases the obligation: and I am sure you would to the highest degree be charmed with Mr. Pulteney's Letter* on the occasion, which he wrote within a Post or two after the General's death. If you were upon the spot, you would judge better than I can describe to you, how much every circumstance of this affair contributes to encrease its value, and how much reason I have in every instance to be happy and thankful for it.

* This and others, relating to this occurrence, are published in the "Memoirs of Mrs. Carter."

I pro-

I propose to be in London early in January; but I hope to hear from you long before I set out. Adieu, every good angel guard you!

LETTER XXXIV.

Clarges Street, *Jan.* 18, 1768.

Your Letter, my dear Mrs. Vesey, had many a weary step to travel through the snow after it had reached Deal, from whence I was departed before its arrival. After much wandering it found me in Clarges Street, where I fixed myself last week, after having paid two or three visits in my road to town. Alas, why do I not find you exercising your genius in decorating the dear blue room in Bolton Row, and harassing the dull heads of poor mortal workmen to realize fairy visions in the heart of a metropolis! instead of hearing that you are engaged in the mere vulgar task of disposing wax lights and card tables, at such a distance. I have nothing at present to regret but the not having you within my reach: all my other friends are either come, or are coming to town; and I am as happy as any body ought to wish to be in this "work-a-day world." It is true, indeed,

I am

I am not quite so rich as you are kindly desirous I should be: yet if riches could procure nothing better than the things which I see they usually do procure, they are scarcely worth the wish of any one who has either a natural turn of head, or social affections of heart.

This thought particularly struck me lately, when I was paying a visit in a room adorned with the utmost profusion of expensive elegance. There was no moving to any situation, or turning one's eyes to any spot, without being struck by some *bijou* of fancy. After the first slight impression I felt myself grow tired and vacant; and I am persuaded that if a single wish could have procured me the whole set of *colifichets*, I could not have induced my mind to form it. Indeed I should as soon be tempted to cry for a doll or a coral. It would not be prudent in general, perhaps, to own myself such an arrant Goth; but you are accustomed to my oddities. Nothing seems to me more fitted to weaken and contract all the noblest powers of the soul, than an attention to the elegant trifles of minute art, where all is fixed and circumscribed, and the work of others, and the imagination has no scope to form any production of its own. Its faculties can exert itself only on objects inaccurate and undefined, which it paints with its own colours, and varies by its own directions into innumerable forms

forms of original composition, and by an unaccountable but delightful sympathy connects its operations with the feelings of the heart. I think I know what I mean, and shall be sure I do if you understand me.

Our dear Mrs. Montagu is in charming spirits and tolerable health. She bids me tell you that it would have been strangely extravagant if Mr. Vesey had not taken an empty house, as you are possessed of such an admirable art of filling it.

Lord Lyttelton is tolerably well. Did I tell you before I left Deal that I had been reading his History *, and that I was extremely charmed with it? You will be glad to hear that his son † behaves at present with more decency than he did.

As you were, if any, so very few years in the world before me, I do not see any reason why you should be stuck so much sooner in the wicker chair. On the contrary, perhaps, my indolence is much more likely to sink into it than your activity. But this is a problematical point which we will discuss

* That of the Life and Reign of K. Henry II. which he presented to Mrs. Carter.

† Afterwards Thomas Lord Lyttelton; the modern Wharton; equally elegant, witty, vain, and profligate: in the morning melancholy, squalid, disgusting, and half-repentant; in the evening, the delight, the admiration, and the scandal of society: always fearful and superstitious, yet not religious.

in

in Bolton Row. Be it as it will, let both of us keep out of it as long as ever we can: and let us too please ourselves with our little harmless fancies of meeting at Lucan, without troubling our heads with the computation of probabilities.

LETTER XXXV.

Clarges Street, *March* 18, 1768.

As great a luxury as I have experienced this evening in my solitary tea, I would gladly have exchanged it, my dear Mrs. Vesey, for a more social entertainment in Bolton Row; and I would have given up my uncontrouled excesses for a limited number of cups, and a grave remonstrance from Mrs. Handcock's prudence and sobriety, between every one of them. I cannot help quitting my books, and employing this only afternoon which I have spent at home for an age, in writing to you, notwithstanding your provoking long silence; for which however I beg you will understand, in spite of all appearances to the contrary, that I am far enough from being in charity with you.

I fancy

I fancy you were not greatly edified by the study of Mr. Walpole's * book. There is always some degree of entertainment in what he writes, but less I think in this than usual, and it is rather more peevish and flippant. It is great pity that he should ever write any thing but Castles of Otranto, in which species of composition he is so remarkably happy. He would, I think, succeed much better as an historian, if he could feel as strong an interest in living excellence as in the characters of his own creation: and this would make him represent a Sydney or a Falkland, as beautifully as he has done a Theodore and Hippolyta. Would it be too refined or uncharitable to attempt to solve this inconsistency, by the supposition that ideal perfection may seem to leave an entire liberty to people not disposed to regard it: while really existing virtues are such awakening and painful calls to imitation, as strongly incline some minds, too lively not to feel their force, and too little inclined to yield to it, to make use of every art to stifle and obscure them? You will think me out of humour with Mr. W——, and so I am. His going out of his way to indulge a sneering contempt of subjects which, whatever

* Afterwards Earl of Orford. It is not quite clear to which of his works Mrs. Carter here alludes, but it seems probable that it is to his "Royal and Noble Authors," first published at Strawberry Hill in 1758.

may

may be his own unhappy opinion of them, he knows to be held sacred by the greater part of his readers, is (to say no worse of it) such violation of decency, as gives very just cause of offence.

Mrs. Montagu sends you her love, and hopes you have received the gazette which she wrote to you some time ago: she bids me add, that after having regaled you with facts, she designed to have sent you *ses pensées, mais qu'elle ne pense jamais*, she is in such a whirl of engagements.—And for that matter so am I, or this Letter, which was begun so many days ago, would have been finished before now. Miss Talbot's being confined with the rheumatism has carried me almost every morning to Lambeth; and I have had only just time to dress, and sit a little while in quiet idleness to enable me to go through my engagements for the rest of the day.

You love me too well not to be glad to hear that Lady Ann Dawson has been so good to give me frequent opportunities of conversing with her: and you are too well acquainted with her exalted goodness, not to imagine how happy I have been in this advantage. I should indeed more sincerely regret for you "the loss of two such friends as Lady Ann Dawson and Mrs. Dunbar out of Ireland," if I did not hope you would have nearly equal opportunities of meeting them in London. Conversing with

with them seems like getting out of the suffocation of the world, and breathing the air of Paradise.

Mrs. John Pitt has not been perfectly well this year; but, God be thanked, has not been ill enough in any respect to give you alarm. In spite of a few transient disorders in her health, the roses are as blooming as ever in her cheeks; and, in spite of the temptations of the world, the virtues springing with active spirit in her heart. She has lived a good deal at home this winter, and formed delightful small parties. Your genius operates in the utter confusion of chairs and tables, and the annihilation of all circular forms.

Mrs. Montagu is much too thin, and by no means perfectly well: but has the same activity and charming spirits as usual.—She scarcely forgives my wishing that for the improvement of her health they could sometimes be put to sleep.

LETTER XXXVI.

Clarges Street, *April* 19, 1768.

INDEED, my dear Mrs. Vesey, I very sensibly feel the kindness of your quitting all the amusing pictures which your imagination must form in the architecture of a cottage, for the sake of giving me the pleasure of a Letter. You do not expect me, I hope, to express any great compunction for any share I might have in the disarray of your card tables. On the contrary, if your blundering *assortiments* put all the good company sufficiently out of temper with you and with each other, to make them forswear all future communication with you, I should value myself exceedingly on contributing to free you from a slavery, from which, by any deliberate effort, you would never have resolution enough to free yourself.

I thought the tone of one paragraph in your Letter did not seem your own, even before you gave me an intimation that it belonged to the Sentimental Traveller, whom I neither have read nor probably ever shall; for indeed there is something shocking in whatever I have heard either of the author, or of his writings. It is the fashion, I find,

I find, to extol him for his benevolence, a word so wretchedly misapplied, and so often put as a substitute for virtue, that one is quite sick of hearing it repeated either by those who have no ideas at all, or by those who have none but such as confound all differences of right and wrong. Merely to be struck by a sudden impulse of compassion at the view of an object of distress, is no more benevolence than it is a fit of the gout, and indeed has a nearer relation to the last than the first. Real benevolence would never suffer a husband and a father to neglect and injure those whom the ties of nature, the order of Providence, and the general sense of mankind have entitled to his first regards. Yet this unhappy man, by his carelessness and extravagance, has left a wife and child to starve *, or to subsist on the precarious bounty of others.

* Sterne had died in the beginning of this year 1768. It were to be wished that these observations of Mrs. Carter were bound up with every edition of his works as a proper antidote to their poison. Few writers have done so much mischief to the world: for by setting up feeling in opposition to principle, and casual benevolence as an excuse for the neglect or the breach of positive duty, he has done more towards confounding the limits of right and wrong than perhaps any other author except Rousseau. His descriptions of the power and the effects of benevolence are beautiful; but a more ancient writer has described it at least as well. See St. Paul's first Epistle to the Corinthians, chap. xiii.

Nor

Nor would real benevolence lead a clergyman to ramble about the world after objects with whom he has no particular connexion, when he might exercise the noblest duties of a benevolent heart in a regular discharge of his proper function, instead of neglecting and disgracing it by indecent and buffoon writings.

The last has been a most delightful winter, and I heartily wish you could have enjoyed it with us, but I hope there is no doubt of you for the next. There is no pleasure in this world comparable to that which is felt in conversing with those in whose principles one has an absolute confidence, and whose general conduct so well exemplifies the excellence of them. The general dispersion is now drawing near. Every separation from an improving and amiable society must be felt with a certain degree of uneasiness, even when it is unaccompanied with any circumstance of distress. But how greatly must the regret be softened, by reflecting that the friends from whom one is separated are, in their several situations, all acting on the same plan, and all engaged in the same common interest; all confiding in the same guidance and protection, and all animated by the same immortal hopes. Such reflections in every absence still preserve the union, and indeed form the only consolation which, amidst the various accidents of a changing world, can

reconcile us to the possibility of meeting no more beneath the sun *.

I have been confined to my pillow all day, but have been drinking my solitary tea, and have got myself into a tolerable capacity to enjoy the evening at Mrs. J. Pitt's. Do not you wish yourself among us? Or are you better pleased with the society of ancient times; of which I shall hope to hear a very particular account in the anecdotes which you have promised Mrs. Montagu.

* Surely the Editor will not be accused of partiality, in pointing out this passage as one of peculiar beauty; equally new and original in the thought, and elegant in the manner of expressing it. How unequal to it is the elaborate and justly celebrated treatise of Cicero on the same subject!—He possessed not indeed the same advantages; and mere worldly friendships must always want the community of interests, hopes, and protection, which the Christian religion affords. With such purity of principle and warmth of attachment, it cannot seem surprising that Mrs. Carter never lost a friend; or that the affection which she had once excited should accompany her to the tomb.

LETTER XXXVII.

Deal, *June* 13, 1763.

If you designed me any share in your Letter to Mrs. Montagu, she most iniquitously defrauded me of my property, for I never saw it; and only heard her read an account of your habit ball, without knowing I had any legal right to such an entertainment. And so I have been for some weeks exceedingly sulky at receiving no proof that I ever came into your thoughts.

I am, as you wished me, returned to Deal, and enjoying the quiet and solitude of the country, as much as an aching head will give me leave: for it has, ever since I came home, been in too much pain to allow me to ramble much beyond the limits of my own apartment. However, worthless as the head is in many respects, if it often prevents my going out, it at least entertains me at home. It is an admirable picture gallery, and furnishes me with very exact resemblances of all my absent friends, whom it sometimes represents in single portraits, and at others grouped in conversation pieces, and in every situation in which I have seen them with the most pleasure.

You

You and I must be of a very discontented disposition if we regret the growing old, while we preserve this vivid imagination, which is the truest and most useful associate of the heart. Indeed they both greatly stand in need of the assistance of each other. Imagination without sentiment seldom rises any higher than painting the figures of still life: and sentiment without imagination wants delicacy and spirit, and languishes into indifference, except in the immediate view of a present object*. I feel what I mean, but shall not absolutely insist on your seeing it, as I believe from the pain and cloudiness of my head, I must appear very *embrouillée*.

Whatever poetical impressions I might have received from the riant and peaceful Arcadian scene, which you so beautifully describe, if I had been enjoying it tête-à-tête with you, they would all have vanished at the flutter of your three misses. Indeed a beauty by profession is a kind of being

* However necessary it may be to guard against feelings being admitted as a guide in moral action, or as a rule of duty, of which it is in reality only the reward, or at most, in some cases, the first motive; still it ought not to be wholly extirpated. It should be regulated, not subdued; admitted as an aid to piety and virtue. though not the principle from which they are produced. For it should be remembered that in a future life one great part of our bliss will probably arise from the feelings, from the gratification of the higher faculties of the soul in its purified state.

much too hurrying and *bruyant* not to overset all the tranquil ideas of sequestered life, and is supportable only in its proper element, a crowded town assembly. I have the more malice against these Gunnings of your's, for interrupting your Letter to me, and defrauding me of at least half a sheet.

How could so strange a fancy come into your head as that there was any probability of my being drawn to court*, unless it be that among the ten thousand people with whom you are acquainted you never met with any one so utterly unfit for such a situation as I am. When you consider this, it may set your conscience at ease for any dislike which you feel at such an idea. You have more need to reproach yourself for saying that people in London were too fond of me, which (supposing it true) is saying that I am too happy. Indeed I acknowledge myself to be much more happy than I deserve; but are not you one of the people who have contributed to make me so, and then take it into your head to quarrel with your own work? However, I am sufficiently in charity with you to rejoice at your going this summer to Dawson

* Probably a renewal of the old story of Mrs. Carter's having some place at court offered to her, of which more is mentioned in the Memoirs of her Life, and in some of Miss Talbot's Letters.

Grove,

Grove. Pray make my very affectionate compliments to Lady Ann Dawson.

Mrs. Dunbar is very busy settling herself at Lovell Farm. I hope the disagreeable part of this business is nearly over, and that she will soon be at leisure to sit down and enjoy all the tranquil pleasures to which her mind is so well adapted. Mrs. J. Pitt is at Sunning-hill, much improved in her health since she left London, probably less from drinking the waters than from seeing Miss Pitt much better than she was in town.

I inclose you a Letter from Mrs. Montagu, who desired me to convey it to you. Her health, I thank God, seems to be in a much more comfortable state than it has been for some time. It can never be very perfect, I fear, while she is harassed by so much business; however, in the country it is relieved by fresh air and exercise, and has not the additional trial of a town racket. She gives me but a poor account of Mr. Montagu, whose state seems very doubtful.

I had the pleasure of meeting Mr. and Mrs. Pery * at Mrs. J. Pitt's. I think I never saw any man carry so much sense in his look as Mr. Pery.

* Mr., afterwards Viscount, Pery, was for many years Speaker of the Irish House of Commons, and was a particular friend of Mr. Vesey.

LETTER XXXVIII.

Deal, *Aug.* 3, 1768.

A THOUSAND thanks to you, my dear Mrs. Vesey, for the two charming drawings, with which I am inexpressibly delighted. I hope you designed them for my property, but it is pretty much the same whether you did or not, as I never will restore them, unless Lady Bingham * will render them still more complete by the addition of your figure; but perhaps you may procure that for

* Lady of Sir Charles Bingham, afterwards Earl of Lucan. This Lady's skill in drawing and painting excited universal admiration, not less in France than in England. In the former kingdom the Editor had an opportunity of witnessing it himself, when he was at Paris with Mrs. Montagu in the year 1776, and had frequently the honour of seeing Lady Bingham and her amiable family. The late unfortunate Queen of that unhappy country, then in the full splendour of her power and beauty, greatly admired Lady Bingham's performances, and honoured her with particular notice, even to friendship. Her Majesty gave her indeed a remarkable proof of regard by the flattering request, which was of course complied with, that Lady Bingham would give her the miniature portraits of her own children, painted by herself.

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me in some other view *. I hope if ever Mr. Vesey talked of demolishing this enchanting abode, he meant nothing more by it than merely to give you an opportunity for the display of your eloquence for its preservation. It is impossible he can be so unsentimental, so unpoetical, and so anti-romantic, as to think seriously of committing so atrocious an action against all the powers of imagination and against you—which all the courts of judicature in Europe, that have any degree of true taste, must allow a most sufficient ground of divorce; and it is certainly, therefore, very fit that in your stead he should take to himself some good, fat, notable Lady Bustle as soon as he has built a four-square brick house, with large comely sash windows, for her reception.

Your French verses are pretty, but French verses can never be either sentimental or sublime; and to mention nothing more, I cannot bear the *rions* in the last stanza, which might do very well for the chateau of Monsieur le Marquis, but the idea does not form a proper accompaniment to the solemn shades and venerable arches, which you and Lady Bingham have so well described at Lucan. Will

* In Mr. Vesey's house in London were a set of views of Lucan, from which it appears to be a most delightful place, abounding in wild and picturesque scenery.

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the day ever come that I shall visit you there? If it was only to laugh, I should never wish it. One may laugh any where, in a regular modern house, and with a dull companion; but I should form expectations of a much higher entertainment in conversing with you amidst Gothic arches and ivyed towers.

When you first mentioned the court scheme to me, I considered it, as you supposed I should, merely as one of the fancies formed by your own partiality to your friend. But you speak in so strong and positive a manner in your last Letter, that I begin to be seriously alarmed by a vague object of terror, to which I find it difficult to affix any determinate idea. Yet surely it is impossible that any one who is the least acquainted with me should think me qualified for such a part as that which you seem to assign. Do pray, my dear Mrs. Vesey, if you love me, let me know as explicitly as you can whatever information you have picked up on this subject; for it will be absolutely cruel in you to leave me in the strange perplexity into which your obscure intimations have thrown me.

Your Letter found me at about twelve miles distance from this place, with a friend in the country, with whom I spent a week, and it would have been an agreeable excursion if my head would have allowed it. I walk more this summer than the last,

but

but my strength is so dependent on the weather that I am often reduced to content myself with sitting on the sea-shore, at the distance of a stone's throw from my own apartment.

I admire your conduct with regard to your company, and hope they will have the wit to find out, that you have chosen the only possible method to prevent your growing heartily tired of them.

I have just heard that Lady Juliana Penn is coming to Margate, which is about fourteen miles from hence. How vexatious not to give the preference to the much finer situation of Deal! My affectionate compliments to Mrs. Handcock: I hope she is treasuring up a supply of prudent admonitions for me over the tea-table against next winter.—Heaven bless you.—Good night.

LETTER XXXIX.

Lambeth Palace, *Sept.* 2, 1768.

Your kind enquiries, my dear Mrs. Vesey, did not reach me so soon as you intended, as your Letter went first to Deal, and I did not receive

receive it here till yesterday. I am much obliged to you for the concern which you express for my friends and me on the late melancholy event at Lambeth *. I scarcely felt my own loss, compared with what I suffered from the effect which I knew it must have on Mrs. and Miss Talbot, who had spent their whole lives with him. Though I perfectly well knew Miss Talbot's absolute submission in every event, to the divine will, there was great reason to apprehend that her weak health might sink under the first shock of so sudden an attack; but I thank God, she has been wonderfully supported, and I had the comfort of finding them both in a better state than could have been expected. The Archbishop had for many months suffered constant pain, which both himself and his physicians took for the rheumatism, and there was no apprehension of any danger. You have seen by the papers what was the immediate cause of his death; he survived the fracture † only three days. This accident, which at first view seemed so grievous a circumstance, soon appeared to have been a merciful means

* Part of this Letter, concerning the Archbishop's character, having been published in Mrs. Carter's Memoirs, p. 274, quarto edition, is here omitted.

† Of his thigh bone, which was become completely carious, and separated of itself without any external violence. See the Bishop of London's Life of him.

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of freeing him from sufferings which must have been every day increasing to a terrible degree.

I know not how much longer Mrs. and Miss Talbot will continue here; certainly, however, not more than a month, and I hope not so long, as every object within these melancholy walls must at every hour remind them of their loss. The hope of being of some little relief to them keeps up my spirits amidst these uncomfortable scenes by which I am surrounded. The disorder and confusion of half unfurnished rooms, which at every step present painful ideas of the dissolution of a family, lately so happily established, you will easily imagine must be extremely affecting.

Miss Talbot has some general remembrance of having seen you at Bath. If you admired her in her infancy, you would have been happy, if you had continued your acquaintance, to find that her whole life had answered every early promise both of her understanding and her character. Her behaviour under the present trial is conformable to every other part of her conduct, and worthy of the principles by which she has ever been so uniformly guided. With the weakest health and the quickest sensibility of her loss, she discovers the noblest fortitude and the most unrepining resignation, of which she gives the best, and, during the struggles of recent grief, the most difficult proof, by constantly

stantly endeavouring to set every remaining blessing in the most comfortable and cheerful point of view.

As soon as my friends leave this place they propose to go to Mr. Talbot's, in Surry, till a house, which they have taken in Lower Grosvenor-street, can be got ready to receive them. As soon as they leave Lambeth I return into Kent. I have writ to you only on one subject, and indeed my present situation will scarcely allow me to fix on any other, but I thought you would be glad to know particularly how we went on.

I am sorry to find you are doubtful about going to Lady Ann Dawson. I should hope the very journey might do you good, the society infallibly must. Adieu. Remember you give me hopes of hearing from you soon. If you write as soon as you receive this, your Letter may be directed to me at the Palace at Lambeth; if not, to Deal.

LETTER XL.

Deal, *Oct.* 13, 1768.

GENTLE gales and halcyon seas convey you safely over, my dear Mrs. Vesey, to the friends who will so truly rejoice to see you on this side the water! Pray dispatch your affairs as fast as possible, and get yourself ready to come with Lady Ann Dawson, for it will be a great comfort to me to think you are embarked in the same vessel with her. She has goodness enough to save from sinking a whole fleet of such poor frail mortals as you and I, and I hope we shall both live long enough to grow the better by her example. Heaven grant our whole society may meet in the same cheerful circumstances as we have enjoyed for so many winters. I shall regret that so many weeks must pass after your arrival in England before I must hope to see you, but I shall feel so much pleasure in knowing you are within my reach, that I shall still be much the better for your coming, even before I receive any actual benefit from it. Hurry over all your ten thousand visits of ceremony and civility, and see and grow tired of all your geniuses and all your rational parrots before the middle of January,

January, that by the time of my arrival you may be grown very quiet and very select, and perfectly well disposed to give up the things which amuse you for the people who love you.

I did not return to Deal till last week, as I could not be easy to leave Mrs. and Miss Talbot while they remained in that uncomfortable abode, so we set out on the same day, and I believe I took my everlasting farewell of Lambeth *. I think myself lucky in having no acquaintance with the successors. It is a very painful circumstance when any rules of propriety oblige one to mere common visiting at any place where one has been accustomed to converse in all the delightful ease of the most intimate friendship, even in cases where no particularly melancholy accident has occasioned the change. If your imagination kindly wandered with me through Gothic scenes, it led you through many a solitary dark passage, for the more frequented parts of the house are so modernized as to have lost all their ancient style; and by the usual effect of such kind of unnatural alterations, what in its original state would have appeared solemn and venerable becomes

* This was not exactly the case, for Mrs. Carter many years afterwards visited Mrs. Moore there, but without any kind of intimacy. With Archbishop Cornwallis (Dr. Secker's immediate successor) Mrs. Carter had no acquaintance, nor with Mrs. Cornwallis till she had ceased to reside at Lambeth.

merely dull, the only point perhaps ever gained by modernizing Gothic buildings.

I write to you now merely because I know not how to refuse any thing you ask, and you wish to hear from me before you set out, for I have such a miserable head-ache that I can hardly see my paper. I am as scrupulous about what is committed to my trust as you are; for though death may appear with more bustle and fury in the tempest on the Irish Sea, his silent shafts are just as effectual on the sheltered shore; and I have given directions to have all my Letters returned to their respective writers.

I should not have suspected you of such an unsentimental conclusion: however, perhaps your *rions* may be just as well as the poets' *iris;* for though love may very naturally enter into a train of solemn ideas, gallantry, which is all that the French mean by it, would make a very absurd motley appearance.

Be so good, with my love to Mrs. Handcock, to desire she will get ready an ample set of prudent lectures for my reformation over the tea-table in Bolton-row. By way of confutation, I think I must prevail on my father to put in execution the scheme which I heard him mention yesterday, of writing a treatise on the benefits of tea, by simply computing how much he had drunk to the age of

eighty-

eighty-one *. If he prefixes his picture to it the eloge will be complete.

I had the pleasure of spending an hour with Miss Finch † two or three times while I was at Lambeth. I left her very busy in preparing for the royal masquerade. The King of Denmark is at Dover to-day, and most of my family here, except myself, are gone to see him.

Adieu, my dear friend. God send you a safe arrival among us. If you knew the difficulty with which I at present write, I am sure you would think me intitled to have the earliest account of your being landed. Do not forget the picture which you promised me. The door must be unlocked by this time; if not, if you have any spirit, you will break it open.

* Dr. Carter lived to the age of eighty-seven, and till he was turned of eighty-five, rode on horseback, and followed his favourite diversions of coursing and setting for several hours at a time.

† Now Mrs. Feilding.

LETTER XLI.

Deal, *Dec.* 2, 1768.

MANY thanks to you, my dear friend, for the conveyance of my billet to Mrs. Norman *, who has given me as usual a gracious answer. I should before this have acknowledged the favour of your first Letter: but the miserable damp weather for so many successive days has quite overset me, and brought back all my feverish and bilious disorders, for which I am swallowing lemon and wormwood draughts *à toute outrance*. The day which did me the most mischief was without wind or rain, but there was a close warm damp to a degree which I seldom remember. There has been no manner of deficiency to complain of since in the article of wind, for every day and night has been a tempest, which indeed, with such an immoderate degree of rain, I believe is a very happy circumstance † to prevent the stagnation and putre-

* In Clarges Street, where Mrs. Carter then lodged.

† Especially in this island, if we may believe the old monkish adage, which Mrs. Carter often quoted; Anglia, si non ventosa, venenosa."

faction of the water, as well as of the liquid in human veins. In this country of high soil and exposed situation, no great harm I hope is done to the fields. Last night two unfortunate ships were driven ashore between Deal and Sandwich. The wind is changed to day, but that only shifts the storm to another point of the compass; and the sea is so boisterous that no boats can get off to the assistance of the poor ship-wrecked people.

To be sure you bid me think on "my sister Chudleigh" in mere malice to make me feel ashamed of a denomination, of which in spite of all the wit which has been levelled against it from Euripides to the present time, I never felt ashamed before. What an anecdote! and what a genius this my sister must be*!

I am glad to hear that your disorder went off so soon. I do not think that your nervous visions of bas reliefs in gold, &c. and which I suppose were mere Grecian, could be half so amusing and sublime

* The Editor is ignorant to what anecdote of this celebrated Lady's life this Letter alludes. Certainly no two characters could be more dissimilar than those of Miss Chudleigh and Mrs. Carter. They were not *sisters* even in the sense which was here meant, as being *old maids*, for Miss Chudleigh had for many years before been the wife of Lord Bristol; and about six months after this was also married to the Duke of Kingston.

as

as a Gothic fever, which I once had of the same nervous kind. This presented me with pointed arches, and endless perspectives of great and solemn architecture. Yet the entertainment was scarcely equal to the pain of looking to interminable distances, by an effort which tired me to a degree that I shall never forget.

LETTER XLII.

Clarges Street, *May* 3, 1769.

You bid me write, my dear Mrs. Vesey, to tell you that I am very well, and that I wish you hanged: but in flat contradiction to both propositions, I am not very well, and I do not wish you hanged—unless it was on one of the boughs of the tree which shades my window, from whence I might have pulled you in to drink tea with me this evening. I know not whether with all my partiality for this favourite tree, I might not have exchanged it for a walk in the Park, if some visits in the morning through these hot dusty streets had not tired me beyond all power of exertion. So I have set in indolent contemplation ever since I parted with Mrs. Montagu, who is gone to Mrs. J. Pitt's.

My day there yesterday was exceedingly pleasant: not a human creature to disturb our tête-a-tête; and the *ramage** of the birds rather gave spirit than interruption to the conversation. Mrs. Pitt brought me home a little after seven, and I then walked beneath the delightful umbrage of the Park to Spring Garden. All this, after having breakfasted in Bolton-row, I hope you will allow rendered the day very complete, though it was too hurrying from my walk in the morning: but I am impatient to get all my visits discharged, that I may be at perfect liberty for the little time yet remaining before the general dispersion, to enjoy the society of my friends.

I delivered as well as I could your message to Miss Finch, about sending back the machine, of which I have no comprehension, and for which I have no specific name; inasmuch as you have described it to me under the several ideas of a fan, a looking-glass, a brusher of dust and cobwebs, the furniture of a cottage, the ornament of a lady's dress—in short a mere riddle, a puzzle, a conun-

* *Ramage*, the singing of birds among the boughs, one of the very few French words for which our language, copious as it is, has no similar term. It is not in many parts of London where this *ramage* can be heard, but the houses in Arlington Street, where Mr. Pitt lived, have gardens behind them open to the Green Park, and full of flowers and shrubs.

drum,

drum, a something or other utterly incomprehensible to my understanding. But whatever it be, Miss Finch promises to return it safely, and I hope you will receive it with all its contradictory qualifications unimpaired, for the world cannot furnish such another unintelligible curiosity.

I have heard no new subject of conversation in town since you left it. Something or other is said in most companies about the masquerade. One should not perhaps indulge the habit of moralizing and feeling so deeply on every occasion, but I cannot help being affected with some degree of melancholy from the reflection that of 300 people whose thoughts are engaged on this fruitless subject, how many by death, by sickness, or by misfortune, may be prevented from enjoying the little that can be enjoyed from all this waste of idle preparation. The common accidents of life seem to strike one with peculiar emotion, whenever they interfere with any scheme out of the common routine of employments and relaxations. But I am come to the end of my paper, so leave the rest of my essay for you to finish. I hope you will keep your resolution of returning Monday or Tuesday; and that you are enjoying this fine evening on the banks of the river al fresco. My respects to Lady Primrose, and best wishes for her success at Southampton.

LETTER XLIII.

Deal, *June* 3, 1769.

Sempre nel tuo camino
Sempre m'avrai vicino.

And so, my dear Mrs. Vesey, I set sail with you to-morrow, taking *I* in the sublime Socratic sense, which allowed no more personal existence to the material and visible part of the human composition, than to the garment that covers it. Now certainly this speculation is very fine, and likewise very true, yet so strong are our prejudices, that though this external nothing is the only circumstance belonging to you, liable to be overturned on a precipice, or drowned in the Irish Sea, I should feel very differently on any such accident, than if it had happened to your respectable crimson furred cloak.——What strange rambling nonsense am I writing, when I meant to assure you of my kindest and tenderest wishes for your safe arrival. I know not if I had lived in classical times, in compliance with your commands, how many libations and odes I might have offered up for your smooth passage. But as things are, I think Christian prayers are so much better adapted to so serious a subject as the preservation of a friend, than heathenish songs, that

that you must content yourself with them. I return Mrs. Montagu's Letter with many thanks; I have since heard several times from her, and my last account was, I thank God, more comfortable than all the rest. She had had no fever for two days, and was mending as fast as she could wish.

I hope you will applaud me for running after a raree-show this evening, it was such a one that if I had missed this opportunity I must have lived to the age of the Countess of Desmond to regain such another. You have doubtless by this time discovered that my raree-show was the transit of Venus. The day was clouded and unpromising, but the sun shone out in full splendour before the beginning of the transit, and continued bright till it sat; so that nothing could be more perfect than our view of this fine phenomenon, which I saw through my brother's telescope, which magnifies the object fifty times. His eyes were so quick that he saw it quite distinctly through a common smoaked glass.

I have not heard from Mrs. Dunbar since we saw her. I long to know how they all do, and what scheme they propose for the summer. It would be a great comfort to me to hear that their minds had regained some degree of tranquillity. Their distress and the ill health of Mrs. Montagu and Miss Talbot, threw a miserable weight on my spirits on leaving London. My accounts from the

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two last are so much mended, that my heart begins to be tolerably at ease about them.

I hope this Letter will find you quietly reposing in the shades of Lucan, after the concussion of the Welch roads and the tossing of the Irish Sea. I am sure you will often think with a tender regret of the friends you have left behind: but let it be mixed with the comfortable hope of our all meeting again. It is true indeed that the varying conditions of life will not suffer us to depend on the fairest prospects which present themselves within the limits of mortality. From human weakness this reflection must sometimes soften our minds into a pensive melancholy: but it can never become gloomy or unhappy while we are in possession of those principles, which secure us against the horrors of a final separation from those we love.

I beg my affectionate love to Mrs. Handcock; I hope she succeeded in her unwearied endeavours to rescue the poor little innocent mouse from the claws of the *Wilkite* cat, and has taken it with her to Ireland. Every blessing attend you, and pray let me hear from you soon.

LETTER XLIV.

Deal, *June* 20, 1769.

Your Letter, my dear Mrs. Vesey, made me as happy as I could be in any account of your being safe and well at such a distance, I rejoiced in your having so delightful a voyage, as I would wish to have the trajet which is so necessary to convey you to your friends in England, appear to your imagination as little formidable as possible.

Long before this I hope the arrival of the paquet has set your heart at ease. I wrote to you by a kind of sympathy on the very day on which your Letter from Conway was dated, which I did not receive till five days after. Mrs. Montagu has probably writ to you herself; but as one is not apt to be tired with the repetition of good news, I will just mention that by a Letter from her, which I received very lately, she seemed perfectly well and in good spirits, except a few sentimental lamentations on the solitary appearance of London by the flight of so many of her friends. She was uncertain as to the time of her stay there; she is to go to Sunning-hill this summer, and invites me to be of the party: but I cannot quit my post here.

I do

I do not think from your description that your imagination could be greatly amused by the view of N—. A profusion of damask and gilding may perhaps be thought a proper artifice to conceal the want of natural beauties in a crowded town: but surely it has a wretched effect when contrasted with sunshine and verdure, and all the vivid glow of vegetable colouring. *Fancy* is a mere fine lady: and her whimsical decorations should be confined to fashionable places. But the scenes of rural retirement are the range of *imagination*, whose magic powers should be exerted in such operations as help to lead the mind out of the usual routine of common and popular life.

Your unexpected rencontre of your friends at Birmingham would have been a delightful incident in your journey, if you could have seen them as happy as they were some months ago. But alas, I fear you must have felt more pain than pleasure from the sight of them, in their present melancholy situation. It gave me great joy to hear that the dear girl's looks are so much mended. May God continue to them the blessings which are still left them.

I am not in spirits at present, I have just lost a relation, whom, though she lived till near seventy, and probably by her death prevented the misfortune of total blindness, I cannot help regretting. But

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it is very happy for our virtue that the considerations which convince our reason, have sometimes very little effect upon our feelings. In a mere view of such scenes as that in which I have for some days been engaged, the mind is awed to seriousness, and the heart softened to every tender sense of human misery and weakness, and in this temper it is more fully prepared to grow wiser and better, than by all the fine speculations of philosophical arguments.

You ask me how you shall quiet your painful apprehensions. They are certainly unavoidable to every affectionate heart, in a world liable to hourly vicissitudes. But though they do not admit of a cure, and it is better for us that they do not, there is a remedy that will enable us to support them with patience, and which will alleviate our present sufferings by future hope.

I beg my kind love to Mrs. Handcock, in spite of the literal account that she is disposed to give of your adventures, and by that means to spoil the fine romantic story that your imagination would raise from them. You had a lucky escape, that the good people of Bangor did not swim you for a witch, when you were in such a conjuring attitude: and you are so little qualified for sinking, that the proofs against you would have been terribly clear.

Adieu!

Adieu! my dear Mrs. Vesey, I have as usual answered your Letter within the week after I had received it. I hope you will in some tolerable degree follow my example, though you are too idle to do it absolutely. Tell me how you do, and what you do, and when you are doing nothing but following your reverie by sunset, or moon light, think sometimes of your most affectionate, &c.

LETTER XLV.

Deal, *July* 28, 1769.

The long experience of your being a very idle Correspondent, happily prevented me, my dear Mrs. Vesey, from alarming myself by assigning any worse reason for your long silence: but your Letter last night accounts for it in a way that I heartily grieve to find, and which would terrify me had not you given me the comfort of knowing that your cough is a great deal better. You will give me a proof that you do not love me so well as I am willing to believe you do, if you do not very, very soon, write me word how you go on. Consider the distance between us, and how many days I must

be

be in anxiety about you, supposing you to write immediately on the receipt of this.

Our dear Mrs. Montagu seems, I thank God, to have tolerably well recovered her illness, and looks, I think, not altered by it, though I believe she has not yet regained her strength and usual spirits. By my naming her looks, you may possibly think I am talking in my sleep: and indeed the sight I had of her seemed transient as a pleasing dream. She has been in Kent, and made me happy by coming to Deal, but could stay only one night. Yet this visit, short as it was, did me good: for there is no describing what an uncomfortable impression remained on my mind from my having left London without seeing her. I hope soon to have the happiness of spending many delightful hours with her at Sunning Hill. She had several times in her Letters proposed this scheme to me, but from the conviction that it was unreasonable for me to ramble again so soon, I had constantly refused it, and thought she had admitted my plea. But without mentioning her intention to me, when she was here, she engaged my father and all my family on her side of the question. As I am perfectly innocent of contributing in the least degree to bring about this event, I may with a safe conscience enjoy it, which I accordingly do, and shall be very glad when I can set out, but when that will be I cannot exactly

exactly tell, as it does not depend on my own wishes.

For this last fortnight I have been in a state of almost absolute solitude; my father and the rest of my family and friends in this place have all been absent on different excursions at the same time. As I hope their respective schemes would do them all good, I could have found sufficient amusement from a variety of playthings, if I had been well enough to play; but indeed my head has not allowed me many active days: so that my solitude has been little more than the mere repose of languid health. In such a state I have reason to be thankful that when I am not well enough to ramble out and enjoy the country abroad, I have so light and riant a situation at home. I am spending this afternoon in great luxury, in spite of a feverish head-ache: drinking tea out of Mrs. Handcock's white tea-pot, and taking snuff out of the sweet pretty snuff-box that you gave me, and thinking with tenderness and gratitude on all your kindness for me. To aid this sentimental disposition, the beautiful landscape within my view from one window, and the sea from the other, are tinctured with the soft melancholy colouring of a rainbow light. How do I wish you were here to enjoy it with me, instead of my talking to you without an answer. What a delightfully painful conversation could

could we hold on the subject of dear Lady Anne Dawson, in which we should so perfectly agree, as your enthusiasm cannot exceed mine, though I had not the happiness of passing so many inestimable hours with her as you did. Yet short as my acquaintance was, it has fixed an impression on my mind which I hope never will be obliterated, though it is accompanied with a painful feeling of the disappointment of those hopes of the enjoyment of her friendship which she had so kindly encouraged, and on which I had so earnestly set my heart: Heaven grant that the influence of her example may contribute to fit me for their accomplishment where they will be liable to no disappointment! I am much obliged to you for making me happy by the account of my having a share in her heart, on which I set a value proportionable to my veneration and affection for her memory. Be so good as to present my kind compliments to Mrs. Henry when you see her, I hope she has not laid aside her intention of coming to England, where I shall be very happy in any opportunity she will allow me of renewing my acquaintance with her.—I exceedingly approve your design of getting her to write down all the particulars you mention, in which I have a strong self-interest, as I know you will not deny me an opportunity of improving by them.—Can it be possible, my dear Mrs. Vesey, that with

to

so noble an enthusiasm for the excellence of dear Lady Anne's character, you should not feel the evidence of those divine principles which raised her to so exalted a pitch of virtue? Such a living original carries a conviction beyond whole volumes of speculative arguments. Few indeed, very few can hope to arrive at such a degree of perfection; perfection almost angelic: but all, by the same means, may acquire enough to render them good and happy in proportion to the various situations and opportunities assigned them.

Since I began this Letter I have heard from Mrs. Montagu, dated from Reading, on her road to Sunning Hill, where I hope in about ten days to follow her. I have had a Letter lately from our dear Mrs. J. Pitt, which is the first that I have received from her since the melancholy event of last spring. She gives me the comfort of saying she is in health and tolerable spirits, and expresses herself on the subject of her loss with so much true piety and resignation, and good sense, as nothing but a superior assistance could inspire, when one considers her very strong affection for her children.

I only saw the Cambridge Ode in a newspaper, and have forgot all about Chatillon. I thought there were some fine stanzas in it: but in general it seemed to me to be the effort of a writer strug-

gling under the necessity of saying something to a patron, and conscious how little could with truth be said. But perhaps this may be mere refining. Upon the whole I was vexed and fretted at such an application of Mr. Gray's genius, whom I wished to have more grace than the University have shewn in their scandalous choice. Though he is much more excusable than they are. My compliments, pray, to Mr. and Mrs. Perry. I too long to pay you a visit, ma quando sara!

LETTER XLVI.

Sunning Hill, *Aug.* 23, 1769.

I AM quite impatient, my dear Mrs. Vesey, to thank you for the pleasure which I received from your Letter this morning. I am heartily rejoiced to find you are freed from the troublesome and alarming consequences of your cough.

I came here about ten days ago, and found our dear Mrs. Montagu, though not so well as I could wish, yet better than she had been, and she begins to find a good effect from the waters, which will, I hope, establish her health to such a degree as

her constitution will admit of, which must, alas, at the very best be liable to very frequent return of disorders. I have the same limited expectations for myself, for my nerves seem beyond the power of any waters to meliorate. I am making a trial of this spring, and so far as I have gone seem to be the better for them, though I fear it is only temporary. How delightful it would be if you could make the trial with us. We should at least be sure to be the better for each other's company, and indeed there is great probability that these waters might do you good.

This country is a perfect new scene to me, and so far as I have travelled over it, appears very delightful; we have not yet made many excursions, as Mrs. Montagu went for some days to Sandleford, and I remained here to go on with the waters. As Mrs. Dunbar went to town about the same time, I was in a state of perfect solitude, and rambled, without any companion but my own reveries, over these wild heaths all day long. There are few things that I ever more earnestly wished than that some lucky event or other might convey me to spend some time at this spot, which is placed within reach of so many of the friends whom I so highly esteem and love. But what are the wishes that are placed on objects that are perpetually exposed to the disappointing accidents of this

varying

varying world! At this very spot I now am. But where are the delightful ideas on which my mind used to dwell with so much pleasure! Dear Lady Anne Dawson, from whose conversation and example I hoped to have derived such lessons of pure and exalted virtue, is flown to heaven: our amiable friends Mrs. Dunbar and Mrs. J. Pitt have not recovered the sad interruption of their domestic comforts; Lady Juliana Penn and Miss Freame *, who had expressed so much kind and cordial pleasure in the prospect of my visiting them at Stoke, are engaged in a scene of deep distress by a very dangerous illness of Mr. Penn, who has had a very violent paralytic attack, from which there can be but small hopes of his recovery. You will easily believe that contemplations like these throw a melancholy cloud over my solitary walks, and indeed they raise many a secret sigh in the most cheerful society; though it is only while I am writing to you that I have once expressed the feelings of my heart. Do not imagine that by this I indulge any repining or discontent. I hope I am deeply sensible of the very many unmerited blessings I enjoy, and

* Now Viscountess Cremorne; a lady whom the increasing intimacy of every year rooted more strongly in the warmest affections of Mrs. Carter's heart, and for whom her esteem equalled her love.

am particularly thankful for the continuance of the dear friend with whom I am. But human happiness, when placed on the enjoyments arising from social connections below the stars, can never be complete. The people of the world, who follow every idle fancy of their heads, are usually pretty secure of acquiring their aim, as one bauble can so easily be replaced by another*. Can it be supposed that while the contracted and trifling schemes of selfishness and of folly are attended with success, the enlarged and generous views of social love should end in disappointment and imperfection! Surely he who implanted all the benevolent affections of the soul, will reward every virtuous exertion of them, in a state where the present mutual participation of suffering will be converted into a common enjoyment of uninterrupted and immortal happiness.

Mr. J. Pitt's family arrived here last Saturday, their house is within half a mile of us, so I hope we shall be very good neighbours. Mrs. Pitt is a good deal fallen away; but has no complaint:

* Thus it is that *the children of this world are in their generation* still *wiser than the children of light;* for they make the most of their perishable and temporary advantages, while *the children of light* but too often neglect to improve their more noble and important interests.

never

never with so much tenderness did I see a more noble resignation to a loss by which she was so deeply struck. Mercia is very much grown and less thin than she was, which I hope is a sure symptom of amended health. Lovel Farm is about two miles from hence.—It is a sweet spot, and has that character of tranquillity and cheerfulness which is so much better adpted to the idea of the country, than that display of art and magnificence which fatigues one in a splendid seat. You will probably soon see Mr. Dunbar, as he talks of going to Ireland, but lovely Mrs. Dunbar does not accompany him. Her mind is too great to feel any other satisfaction in their present accession of fortune, than as it will furnish greater opportunities of doing good: and in this I hope and believe he will concur with her.

Mrs. Montagu desires me to tell you, that she loves you dearly, even more than she hates writing, and therefore you may expect to hear from her soon: but I would not wait for her, as I am sure you would rather wish to hear soon from one of us, than to wait longer for both. Lord Lyttelton was here, and gone before we came. Mr. Stillingfleet is here, and desires his compliments to you. Your loss of the power of expressing your ideas is just as groundless a fancy, as your supposing I should not be able to read your Letter. I neither

in the last, nor any former, ever found any difficulty, nor ever lost a single word.

My Lord Chancellor of Ireland does me honour by his remembrance, and I beg you will present my respects when you return his visit. How can Mr. Vesey have the conscience to think I am in charity with him, after the trick he served me last year! However, whenever he makes reparation by bringing you to England, I shall be heartily glad to shake hands and be friends with him. I am just come from the Wells, where I met all our friends, who are well and desire every kind remembrance. The Dunbar family only took a flight hither, and are gone back to breakfast with Lord Irnham and Miss Luttrel, who are with them at Lovel Farm. Mr. and Mrs. Pitt are gone to finish their ride. Mrs. Montagu is drinking the waters; and I am come home to prepare for attending her to Lady Frances Coningsby's, and to conclude my Letter, which my head would not suffer me to do last Post.

I perfectly agree with you, that all further enquiries are useless at least, if not hurtful. A steady attention to the rule of duty as such, is the surest path to conviction. The natural feelings and interests of a good heart and the divine assistance, will sooner or later subdue any mere constitutional scepticism to such a degree, as will be

sufficient

sufficient to calm the mind into tranquillity, and encourage it by cheerful hope. This is all that is necessary to comfort and to virtue: and high transports of divine enthusiasm, though a great blessing when founded on real principles of true religion, can like other distinguished advantages, fall to the lot of very few.

My affectionate love to Mrs. Handcock; I know not how long I shall remain at this place, but direct to me at Deal, and your Letter will be sent after me, wherever I am. I hope soon to hear that your hurrying season is over, and that you are quietly settled, as it is impossible you should be well in such a constant exertion of animal spirits.

You will be glad to hear that the young Duchess of Beaufort is likely to do well. What a quick succession of distress was this unhappy accident to poor Mrs. Boscawen!—and yet, perhaps, the anxiety arising from the last misfortune may prove a sad but efficacious remedy for the first, as her mind being kept in solicitous agitation from the doubtful state of her daughter, would prevent its being totally fixed on the irrecoverable loss of her son; and the seeing her advance towards a state of safety will give her a kind of spirits, which she would not have felt if every thing had gone on in the usual track.

I have

I have extended my Letter to an immoderate length, but must not conclude without giving you the pleasure of knowing that Lady Primrose is very well. I met her twice at Mr. Dunbar's; we are to visit her at Old Windsor, as soon as it is in our power; but Mr. Montagu comes here to-morrow for a few days, and our distant schemes cannot take place till his return to Sandleford. I saw Mr. Dawson last week, who is pretty well. By the last accounts, the physicians thought Mr. Penn would recover, but he himself is strongly of a contrary opinion. He has always preserved his senses, and expressed the most perfect resignation.

LETTER XLVII.

Sunning Hill, *Sept.* 22, 1769.

I AM too impatient to set your heart at rest, my dear Mrs. Vesey, to delay giving you an account of Mrs. Montagu, till I can go to fetch a frank out of my bureau at Deal, as I am sure you will most gladly pay for the intelligence of her being

being very greatly better; and it seems evident that the waters do her good.

The weather was for some days so rainy that it drove us to London with an intention of not returning here, unless the sun gave us a fair invitation; which, after our staying some days in the miserable desolated environs of Berkeley Square, it condescended to do, and we returned hither on Monday last for another week of the waters. They have done me all the good that on such a constitution could reasonably be hoped.

Our sweet friend Mrs. J. Pitt set out for Encombe this morning with her family. We have been much together, which has greatly enlivened our sejour at Sunning Hill. I esteem and love her more than ever. It is quite edifying to see the noble manner in which she supports the wound which she so deeply feels. Not contented with that melancholy resignation, which though it preserves the mind from rebellion and complaint, too often sinks it into indolence and uselessness; she has been exerting herself with zeal and activity to relieve the wretched state of the poor people in this place; and to awaken a sense of industry among them, which will be a great blessing to them, if it succeeds, and certainly to herself, whether it succeeds or not. Our dear Mrs. Dunbar

bar is at present in absolute solitude at Lovel Farm; as she is as yet uncertain of her destination, Mrs. Pitt wished her very much to follow her to Encombe. But it is not impossible but she may be summoned to cross St. George's Channel to attend those sublime personages, who make such a pompous detail of syllables in your Letter. If I was thirty years younger, they would offer me a tempting invitation. However I have the less reason to regret the small probability I have of seeing the originals, as my imagination is, I believe, nearly as well amused from your description, which I can and do enjoy without the trouble of travelling over land and sea.

On Monday next Mrs. Montagu and I take our departure from this place, and separate to our respective homes. She goes immediately to Sandleford. I propose to spend a day or two with Mrs. and Miss Talbot at Richmond, the latter I fear is worse than she is willing to acknowledge to me; if I find her tolerable I shall so regulate my motions as to be at home the end of the next week. Indeed I am very impatient to get there; both as it is right I should, and as I want, after all this desultory living, to get quietly settled in my own apartment. High degrees of pleasure are at proper intervals very useful to keep up a proper spirit and activity of mind, but one soon perceives that

that mere conveniencies are the things necessary to one's ease, which is the most natural and permanent. Ease and conveniencies are no where to be found but at home; and what a blessing it is that such principles as these are so strongly implanted in us, as frequently to be of the most salutary effect; the spirit wearies with perpetual dissipation, and home presents the joyful means of rest and quiet, at least such a home as I am blessed with.

Mrs. Montagu desires her love; she will write to you when she is settled at home. Adieu, we are going to Eton to see Topham's drawings, for which I am too much of a Goth to have any manner of taste, but I enjoy the drive through the forest.

LETTER XLVIII.

Deal, *Nov.* 13, 1769.

You have been so much accustomed to receive a very speedy return to your Letters, that miserably unqualified as I am at present for writing, I am not willing to omit it, from the fear of giving

giving you any alarm. I thank God, Mrs. Montagu is very well: my own health is as good as I can expect it to be under the deep distress I feel from a certain intelligence that my dear and most excellent friend, Miss Talbot, is past all hope of recovery. Her death, when I received the first account, was almost hourly expected. Since, there has been an apparent amendment, but not such a one as can allow me to form the least hope of her being restored. Judge of my situation, and of the feelings with which I watch every return of the Post. In this state of miserable suspence I find it impossible to fix to any thing: my mind is all confusion, and hurried from one painful object to another without ceasing. When all is over, and she is released from a state of suffering, I trust my heart will subside into quiet grief for my own irreparable loss of such a friend, and such an example. In these sad moments of dreadful expectation my only comfort is to reflect with thankfulness on the inestimable blessing which I have for so long a course of years been permitted to enjoy, of an intimate connection with a character of such exalted and uncommon goodness. May I be enabled to make such an improvement of so high an advantage, as may qualify me to meet her, where there will be no danger of any future separation!

I am

I am glad to find you gained a sight which repaid you for quitting your bed at so early an hour. Indeed Venus made a most remarkably beautiful appearance; and you saw her splendour with an accompaniment that rendered your spectacle quite enviable. Mrs. Montagu's, Mrs. Susan, was deputed to watch the appearance of the comet, and to call us up when she saw it. She made the same mistake which you did: but an hour afterwards gave us another summons, when the comet really did appear, but to my disappointment, as I remember one much more distinct and glaring about twenty-three years ago. I hope you had a full sight of the late glorious and very remarkable aurora, which has the most beautiful variety of colouring of any I ever saw. I should have been the worst person to whom you could possibly apply for any help in your system of comets, as you know I never let my thoughts run wild upon such subjects.

My sister and all her family are with me at present, among the rest the little prattling boy who breakfasted with you last year, and who is now reading in my room: I told him I was going to write to you, and desired to know if he had any message to you and Mrs. Handcock. "O yes! pray give my love to them, and tell them I have not forgot them." I hope you feel the force of his compliment,

compliment, as it plainly proves how forcibly your fascinating manners strike even a child. I should very much enjoy this visit if I was in a happier disposition, but at present my spirits are so low that I find myself much best when I am alone. Since I began this Letter I have had two accounts of my dear Miss Talbot. She continues mending, and may probably continue for some time in the same state; but the physicians pronounce her state to be desperate, and I dare not indulge any hope. She is removed to town, and if I receive such a Letter as I expect, I shall very soon go there on that account. But my situation is very uncertain, therefore direct your Letters here as usual, and they will follow me wherever I happen to be.

Lady Anne Dawson, before she left England, made me promise to introduce her to Miss Talbot, and I felt great pleasure in the thoughts of being instrumental to the acquaintance of two characters who bore so striking a resemblance to each other. But their meeting has been deferred till they can become acquainted upon happier terms than are possible to the precarious condition of mortal connexions: they are both fitter companions for angels and for each other than for the best of their earthly friends, engaged in the interests and schemes of a world to which their minds were so much superior.

Indeed

Indeed to judge from my own feelings I must grieve for you, in being obliged to quit the dear, tranquil, poetic scenes of Lucan, for the hurry and mere vulgar prosaic life of Dublin.—But you have a better art of amusing yourself in a crowd than I have, who am just as many degrees removed from the spirit of a rake as ever. I have writ you a dull and melancholy Letter, my dear Mrs. Vesey, which proves my confidence in your kindness for me. I thank you for not encouraging Mr. Dunbar's residence in Ireland. My best love to Mrs. Handcock; let me hear from you soon.

LETTER XLIX.

Deal, *Dec.* 8, 1769.

YOUR very kind Letter, my dear Mrs. Vesey, certainly claims my earliest thanks, and I will at least begin a Letter, though my time at present is not sufficiently my own to allow me to finish it, but à plusieurs reprises. I will not delay the subject on which you are so good as to interest yourself for me. My dear Miss Talbot is greatly mended

mended since I wrote you last, and Mrs. Montagu thinks her better than she has been since her last return from Richmond. For this respite I am very thankful, and it gives a suspension to the distress of my mind. As far as possible I restrain my thoughts from looking forward, as I dare not, alas! build any solid hopes on so precarious a foundation as the present favourable symptoms, while the strong assurances which were at first given me that, humanly speaking, a recovery was impossible, remain uncontradicted.

The prospect of a solitary passage through the heavy road, and dim twilight of our concluding journey is indeed a melancholy idea: but happily there are but few cases in which it is verified. Where we are not wanting to ourselves, the divine goodness raises up successive comforts through the whole of our progress, which alleviate, if not supply, the deficiencies of those which we have lost. It is true that every individual that strongly engages our affection has some characteristic and distinguishing mark, which gives it an appropriated place in the heart: and whenever it is removed, the vacant apartment remains unfitted and sacred to the memory of its departed guest. Thus is it wisely and graciously appointed, that while our present companions assist us to pursue our journey with cheerfulness and spirit, the tender regret for those

whom

whom we have lost extends our wishes and hopes to the end of it; and gives a delightful prospect of our arrival at that universal home, where the imperfect system of human happiness will be rendered complete, by the assembling of all those who have participated and assisted our trials and our virtues through different stages of our mortal passage.

Why did you start when the particular train of thought in which you were engaged, made you turn your eyes with an inexplicable kind of expression to the opening door? Ah, my dear Mrs. Vesey, the heart is wiser and honester than the head, and its unsophisticated feelings often give a powerful and sudden attestation to many an important truth, which our perverse and foolish reasonings involve in perplexities and doubts. If at that hour of silence and solemn thought, dear Lady Ann had been permitted to stand before you, could even that appearance have been more convincing than the unprejudiced voice of common sense, which, with an intuitive perception, assents to the truth of eternal revelation; and by a quick decisive sentence pronounces it absurd and impossible that such virtue could ever die.

If the text of the sermon you mention is "*It is well*, &c.*" I have read and thought it very

* Perhaps from 2 Kings, iv. 26.

original and striking. If you have any other on the same subject, I shall be obliged to you for it: as I should be glad to have them in my possession, but know not where to purchase them. I suppose in Dublin they are easy to be had. I long for you to put in execution your scheme of making Mrs. Henry write those interesting particulars, by which I hope we shall both benefit; pray my kind love to her.

Mrs. Montagu, I thank God, continues well, and Mrs. Dunbar writes me word, is in very good looks, so I hope the Sunning-hill waters may be depended on, as an effectual resource. You will be glad to hear that Lord Winchelsea's health is greatly mended since they left England; the last news was from Dijon. I hope to be in town on new year's day; but if you answer this as you ought, I shall have the pleasure of receiving it here.

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Carter, Elizabeth
A series of letters between Mrs. Elizabeth Carter and Miss Catherine Talbot from the year 1741 to 1770

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